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MAWLANA JALAL AL-DIN RUMI

SELECTIONS FROM DISCOURSES OF RUMİ

Rûmî
YAYINLARI

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RUMI YAYINLARI

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ABOUT FIHI MA FIH (MAWLANA'S DISCOURSES)

Fihi Ma Fih is one of the greatest works of Mawlana who is a great contemplator, scholar and spiritual Master. His other works include Mathnawi and Diwan-i Kabir. The sixth section was organized in Arabic and the rest were written in Persian. The work was composed by means of collecting the discourses of Mawlana by his son Sultan Valad and his disciples. The phrase such as "Mawlana said, Hudawandigar replied" are accepted as they indicate it was not written by Mawlana. Apart from the indications such as "Hudawandigar replied, Mawlana said", the connections with Mathnawi about the topics and the style resemblances are proofs that the work belongs to Mawlana.

It's known that this form of book is common before Mawlana and also after him. For, *Maarif* of Mawlana's father Sultanu'l Ulama in three volumes, *Maqalat* of Shams-i Tabrizi and Sultan Valad's *Maarif* are also written by the disciples in the same style. If Mawlana's fame and his precious sentences were taken into consideration, it's impossible not to protect his preaching.

As to the name of the book, it makes probable that the work was not written by Mawlana himself. It's also a common belief that the work had its latest condition and the name FIHI MA FIH after Mawlana.

The work wasn't known by this title at the beginning. Fihi Ma Fih was written only on some covers and on the other copies,it was written as Risale-i Sultan Valad, Asraru'l Jalaliya. In Mawlavi sources, the name of the work is not as such. According to an Iranian Scholar, Bediuzzaman Furuzanfer, the work was mentioned as Fihi Ma Fih by the author of Bostanu'l Siyaha.

Some people claimed that the name of the work is *Maqalat* and they took the following verse of Mawlana as a proof: "There were a lot of counsels, question and answers between The Creator of Universe and that pious person so that the sky and earth were illuminated by them. All of these were mentioned in Maqalat."

The Turkish equivalent of Fihi Ma Fih is "The things inside; the things inside are in it; it's the things inside which are in." but by this phrase, it was meant "Whatever is inside it" in Turkish

Though it is appropriate to name the book as such, a couplet from Futuhat-i Makkiya of Ibn-i Arabi is shown as a source for the source of this phrase. In fact, the very phrase was used in many poems of Ibn-i Arabi.

The work consists of an introduction and more than seventy short or long sections. These sections begin either directly with an issue or with an answer given to a disciple by Mawlana. For this reason, the issues and topics determine in each section, though being individual from the point of content, shows a completeness from the Mawlana's general thoughts on Sufism, his thoughts, nature, poetical understanding, important events concerning with the human and world and his impact around him...

From the content of the discourses that consists the sections, it's understood that each one was presented at a different time. So there is not a chronological organization for the work. But it can be understood that many of them were said during the last ten years of Mawlana. It's observed that there is general organization in the work. Many of the recorded discourses were presented to Mawlana and the necessary corrections were made by him. At the end, it was written completely.

The sentences in the work are usually short. Arabic couplets and idioms are less than the Persian ones. Even the Persian equivalent of some words and idioms that are frequently used in Arabic were preferred. In order to determine the topics in the work, verses of Qur'an, traditions of Prophet and the sayings of great masters, Arabic and Persian proverbs, poems taken from Arabic poets, especially Mutanabbi and from Persian poets such as Sanai, Haqani, Seyyid Hasan-i Ghaznawi, Najmaddin Razi, Fahrad-

din Murgani, Kamaladdin Isfahani and also verses from Mathnavi contributed from the point of language and plainness of expressions.

Some parts of the work is addressing to Muineddin Parwana, and Mawlana mentions the sayings of his father Sultanu'l Ulama (sultan of the scholars), Shams-i Tabrizi, Sayyid Burhanaddin and Salahaddin-i Zarqubi and also mentions some of their states and manners. As to the parts those seem as repetitions, Mawlana says, "If this sentence seems as a repetition to you, it is because you haven't understood your first lesson yet. So we have to repeat the same sentence everyday."

Fihi Ma Fih consists of various topics and question answers that are pronounced within conversations without any artistic consideration. Thus, it constitutes one of best example of Persian prose. Although various topics are dealt within more than seventy sections, it can be said that there is a general coherence between the sections.

There are various topics in Fihi Ma Fih. The preeminent element in this work is Sufism. Many sections explains directly the thought of Unity of Being, absolute being and theophany, universe, planets, the elements and dawn, the world and hereafter, human, saint, prophet and the matured man, initiation and its levels, certainty, love and transcendence. Those who read Fihi Ma Fih would see how Mawlana was able to explain his thoughts and opinions concerning the

mentioned topics clearly also with a great power and bravery.

Most of the explanations consist of Mawlana's answers to the questions of others. While answering, the speech develops and conversation becomes longer. In this prose form, Mawlana's plain style, logic power, association superiority, his aptitude of sampling takes our attention at once. Mawlana transforms the complicated and abstract matters of Sufism into a concrete and clear form. Different examples presents for an issue makes the issue a simple one. His power in logic, his giving appropriate examples, his way of addressing and conversations in a form of dialogs in some places resemble to those of Socrates and Platon.

The proverbs, idioms, stories in Fihi Ma Fih and their way of usage and expression resemble to those of Mathnawi. However, because of the necessity of Mathnawi form, the issues were told by subtle expressions. For, the poet is surrounded by dependence of rhyme and metre and the limits of verse. Since there is not such a limit in Fihi Ma Fih, Mawlana mentioned divine secrets in a form to be understood by the listeners there and according to their capabilities and endurance. Thus, we do not see naturally the literary beauties as the ones in Mathnawi here in this work.

Another feature of Fihi Ma Fih is the explanation of some issues in Mathnawi when needed. From this

respect, Fihi Ma Fih is accepted as Mawlana's own interpretation of Mathnawi.

Fihi Ma Fih was published three times in Persian. The first one was published in India in 1928 by comparing seven manuscripts. The second one is the lithography in 1915 in Tehran. In this copy, Fihi Ma Fih was published together with Sultan Valad's Maarif. But it has many misprints.

The third imprint in Persian was prepared by of Bediüzzaman Furuzanfer who was one of the professors of University of Tehran. (Kitabu Fihi Ma Fih , prep. B. Furuzanfer, Tehran 1330). The work which was prepared by means of comparing the copies in Iran and Istanbul libraries was published 1330 Shamsi Hijri as the 105th book of Tehran university publications. In this copy, many precious explanations, footnotes, sayings of prophet and religious scholars, proverbs, Arabic and Persian poems and an index that indicate proper nouns were added. Furuzanfer used eight manuscripts while preparing the text of Fihi Ma Fih. Meliha Ulker Anbarcıoğlu's introduction of Fihi Ma Fih translation and also the introduction part of Golpinarlı translation have sufficient information on the copies used by Furuzanfer.

Fihi Ma Fih was translated in to Turkish firstly by Ahmet Avni Konuk (d.1938). A. Avni Konuk prepared his translation by comparing nine different Fihi Ma Fih copies. Konuk preferred the closest word from the point of meaning among the words seen in different copies while comparing them and finished

his translation in seventy three sections. He also stated that there may be other sections that he couldn't see. One of the manuscripts of translation was given to Mawlana Museum as an endowment according to his will and registered as no 24 in library Metropolitan Municipality of Istanbul, Orhan Ergin section. The translation, after being an endowment in Konya museum for many years, was prepared by Selcuk Eraydın and published in 1994 (Fihi Ma Fih , trans. A.Avni Konuk, prep. Selcuk Eraydın, Iz yayıncılık, Istanbul, 1994).

Fihi Ma Fih was also translated into Turkish by Meliha Ulker Anbarcıoglu in seventy one sections and was published in 1954 as the 28th book of eastern Islamic classics of Ministry of National Education (Fihi Ma Fih, trans.M. Ulker Anbarlıoglu, MEB, Istanbul, 1990). Anbarcıoglu prepared this translation from Furuzanfer's Fihi Ma Fih.

Abdulbaki Golpinarli translated Fihi Ma Fih in that he saw some mistakes in Anbarcıoglu translation and work was published in 1959 in 76 section.(Fihi Ma Fih , trans. Abdulbaki Golpinarli, Konya ve Mülhakatı Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği, Konya 2001). While translating this work, Golpinarlı used Bediüzzaman's work, the copies in Fatih Library and Fihi Ma Fih copy registered in Konya Museum no 79.

Among these translations, Avni Konuk's translation which was prepared to print by Selcuk Eraydın became so successful in that it protects especially Sufi terms and has helped Fihi Ma Fih to be understood

better. Although Abdulbaki Golpinarli translated Fihi Ma Fih because he didn't like Anbarcıoglu's translation and because of mistakes in it, his using a different style by leaving common style a side and translating Sufi and other many terms in the work makes the work difficult to understand.

We used especially Ahmet Avni Konuk's translation prepared by Selcuk Eraydın and other two translations. While choosing the texts, we preferred the ones those will attract the attention of readers and let them to have information about the content of the work. We tried to add each part a title that would express the issue told in the text.

We hope that this work which was presented to readers because of "2007 Mawlana year" would contribute to re-explain Mawlana's Sufi and contemplative world and also for understanding other great Sufis and contemplators.

Yard. Doç. Dr. Sezai KÜÇÜK

Discourse 1

Rumi stated: Mohammed, the great Prophet, once said, "The worst of scholars are those who visit princes, and the best of princes are those who visit scholars. Wise is the prince who stands at the door of the poor, and wretched are the poor who stand at the door of the prince."

Now, taking the outward sense of these words, people think that scholars should never visit princes or they will become the worst of scholars. That is not the true meaning. Rather, the worst of scholars are those who depend upon princes, and who revolve their life and purpose around the attention and favor of princes. Such scholars take up learning in hopes that princes will give them presents, hold them in esteem, and promote them to office.

Therefore, such scholars improve themselves and pursue knowledge on account of princes. They become scholars from their fear of princes. They subject themselves to the princes' control. They conform themselves to the plans that princes map out for them. So, whether they visit a prince, or a prince visits them, still in every case they're the visitors, and it is the prince who is visited.

However, when scholars do not study to please princes, but instead pursue learning from first to last for the sake of truth-when their actions and words spring from the truth they have learned and put to use because this is their nature and they cannot live otherwise-just as fish can only thrive in water-such scholars subject themselves to the control and direction of God. They become blessed with the guidance of the prophets. Everyone living in their time is touched by them and derives inspiration from their example, whether they are aware of the fact or not.

Should such scholars visit a prince, they are still the ones visited and the prince is the visitor, because in every case it is the prince who takes from these scholars and receives help from them. Such scholars are independent of the prince. They are like the light-giving sun, whose whole function is giving to all, universally, converting stones into rubies and carnelians, changing mountains into mines of copper, gold, silver and iron, making the earth fresh and green, bringing fruit to the trees, and warmth to the breeze. Their trade is giving, they do not receive. The Arabs have expressed this in a proverb: "We have learned in order to give, we have not learned in order to take." And so in all ways they are the visited, and the prince is the visitor.

The thought comes to me at this point to comment on a verse of the Koran, although it is not related to the present discourse. However, this idea comes to me

now, and I want to express it so that it can go on record.

O Prophet, say to the prisoners in your hands.
'If God knows of any good in your hearts,
He will give you more than He has taken,
And He will forgive you.
Surely God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.'

This verse was revealed when Mohammed had defeated the unbelievers, slaying, plundering and taking prisoners, whom he tied hand and foot. Amongst the prisoners was his uncle, 'Abbas. The chained people wept and wailed all night in their helpless humiliation. They had given up all hope of their lives, expecting the sword and slaughter. Mohammed, seeing this, laughed. "Look!" the prisoners exclaimed. "He shows the traits of a person after all. This claim that he is superhuman is not true. There he stands looking at us prisoners in these chains, enjoying it. Just like everyone ruled by their passions- when they gain victory over their enemies and see their opponents vanquished to their will, they rejoice and feel happiness."

"Not so," answered Mohammed, seeing what was in their hearts. "Never would I laugh at the sight of enemies conquered by my hand, or the sight of your suffering. But I do rejoice, in fact I laugh, because with inner vision I see myself dragging and drawing people by collars and chains, out of the black smoke of Hell into Paradise, while they complain and cry, 'Why are you pulling us from this pit of self-

destruction into that garden of security?' So, laughter overcomes me.

"But since you have not yet been granted the vision to see what I am saying, listen. God commands me to say this to you: First you gathered your forces and mustered your might, trusting completely in your own virtue and valor. You said to yourselves, 'We will conquer the Muslims and vanquish them.' But you did not see that One Power more powerful than yourselves. You did not know the One Force above your force. And so all that you planned turned out the opposite. Even now in your fear, you still hold onto your beliefs and do not see the One Reality over you. Rather than facing that Power, you see my power, because it is easier for you to see yourselves conquered by me.

"But even in your present state, still I say to you: If you recognize my power, and accept yourselves vanquished to my will in all circumstances, I can still deliver you from this grief. He, who is able to bring forth a black bull from a white bull, can also produce a white bull from a black bull. Turn away from your former ways, and likewise I will return to you all the property that has been taken from you, in fact many times as much. Even more, I will absolve you of all blame, and grant you prosperity in this world and the world to come."

"I have repented," said 'Abbas. "I have turned from my former ways." Mohammed said, "God demands

a token of this claim you make, for easy it is to boast of love, but other is the proof thereof."

"In God's name, what token do you demand?" asked 'Abbas.

"Give all the properties that remain to you for the army of Islam, so the army of Islam may be strengthened," said Mohammed. "That is, of course, if you have truly become a Muslim and desire the good of Islam and Muslimdom."

"Prophet of God, what remains to me?" said 'Abbas. "They have taken everything, leaving me not so much as an old reed-mat."

"You see," said Mohammed, "you have not yet given up your old ways. You have not yet seen the light of truth. Should I tell you how much property you still have? Where you have hidden it? To whom you have entrusted it? Where you concealed and buried it?"

"God forbid!" exclaimed 'Abbas.

"Did you not entrust so much property specifically to your mother?" asked Mohammed. "Did you not bury your gold under such and such a wall? Did you not tell your mother in detail, 'If I return, give this back to me. But if I do not return safely, then spend so much upon such and such an object, and give so much to So-and-So, and so much is to be for yourself'?"

When 'Abbas heard these words he raised his hand in complete acceptance. "Prophet of God," he said, "truly, I have always thought you carried the fortune of the old kings, such as Haman, Shaddad, Nimrod

and the rest. But now that you have spoken I know this favor is divine, from the world beyond, from the throne of God." "Now you have spoken truly," said Mohammed. "This time I have heard the snapping of the girdle of doubt that you had within you. I have an ear hidden within my inmost Soul, and with that hidden ear I can hear the snapping of doubt within anyone. Now it is true for a fact that you believe."

I have told this story to the Amir for this reason: In the beginning you came forward as a champion of Muslimdom. "I ransom myself," you said. "I sacrifice my own desires, considerations and judgement so that Islam will remain secure and strong." But because you put your trust in your own plans, loosing sight of God, and forgetting that all things proceed from God, all your intentions have turned out the opposite. Having struck a bargain with the Tartars, you are unintentionally giving them assistance to destroy the Syrians and the Egyptians, which in the end may bring ruin to the realm of Islam. So God has turned this plan you made for the survival of Islam, into its own destruction.

Turn your face to God, for things are in a dangerous condition. Yet, even in your present state, my friend, do not give up hope, but look to God and give yourself up to Its will. You thought your own strength of spirit proceeded from yourself, just as 'Abbas and the prisoners did, thus you have fallen into weakness. But do not give up hope, because He, who can produce weakness from strength, can bring forth an

even greater strength from this weakness. Just as Mohammed rejoiced during the prisoners' grief, so too I find joy in your present embarrassment, because from this weakness and suffering can come something greater than has been lost. Therefore, do not give up hope, for

"Of God's comfort no one despairs,
Except the unbelievers."

My purpose in speaking this way to the Amir was so that he could see the matter correctly, and accept the will of God humbly. He has fallen out of an exceedingly high state into a low state, yet in this way he may grow. Life can show the most wonderful things, but behind all of them lies a trap should we forget the source of this wonder. God has devised this plan so that we will learn not to claim, out of arrogance and vanity, these ideas and plans as our own.

If everything were in truth as it appears to be, Mohammed, endowed as he was with a vision so penetrating, so illuminated, would never have cried,

"Lord, show me things as they are.
You show a thing as fair, and in reality it is ugly.
You show a thing as ugly, and in truth it is beautiful.
Show us everything just as it is,
So that we will not fall into the snare."

Now, your judgement, however good and luminous it may be, is certainly not better than the Prophet's judgement. So do not put your trust in every idea and every notion, but only in God and Its wisdom.

Discourse 2

Someone said: "Our Master does not utter a word." Rumi answered: Well, it was the thought of me that brought you to my presence. This thought of me did not speak with you saying, "How are things with you?" The thought without words drew you here. If the reality of me draws you without words and transports you to another place, what is so wonderful with words? Words are the shadow of reality, a mere branch of reality. Since the shadow draws, how much more the reality!

Words are a pretext. It is the inner bond that draws one person to another, not words. If someone should see a hundred thousand miracles and divine blessings, still, without an inner connection to that saint or prophet who was the source of those miracles, all these phenomena would come to nothing. It is this inward element that draws and moves us. If there were no element of amber in straw, the straw would never be attracted to the amber [Rumi is referring to static electricity here]. They would not cling to each other, even if you rubbed the amber with fur. This exchange between them is hidden, not a visible thing.

It is the thought that brings us. The thought of a garden brings us to the garden. The thought of a shop brings us to the shop.
However, within these thoughts is a secret deception. Have you never gone to a certain place thinking it would be good, only to find disappointment? These thoughts then are like a shroud, and within that shroud someone is hidden. The day reality draws you and the shroud of thought disappears, there will be no disappointment. Then you will see reality as it is, and nothing more.
"Upon that day when the secrets are tried." So, what reason is there for me to speak? In reality that which draws is a single thing, but it appears to be many. We are possessed by a hundred different desires. "I want vermicelli," we say. "I want ravioli. I want halvah. I want fritters. I want fruit. I want dates." We name these one by one, but the root of the matter is a single thing:
the root is hunger. Don't you see how, once we have our fill of but one thing, we say, "Nothing else is necessary?" Therefore, it was not ten or a hundred things, but one thing that drew us.
"And their number We have appointed only as a trial."
The many things of this world are a trial appointed by God, for they hide the single reality. There is a saying that the saint is one, humankind is a hundred, meaning the saint's whole attention remains upon the one truth, while people are scattered over a hundred appearances. But which hundred? Which fifty?

Which sixty? Lost in this world of mirrored reflections, they are a faceless people without hands and feet, without mind and Soul, quivering like a magic talisman, like quicksilver or mercury. They do not know who they are. Call them sixty or a hundred or a thousand, and the saint is one, but is not this view a trial itself? For the truth is that the hundreds are nothing, while the saint is a thousand, and a hundred thousand, and thousands of thousands.

A king once gave a single soldier the rations for a hundred men. The army protested, but the king said nothing. When the day of battle arrived, all the men fled the field, except that one soldier who fought alone. "There you are," the king said. "It was for this I fed one man as a hundred."

It behooves us to strip away all our prejudices and seek out a friend of God. However, when we've spent our whole life in the company of people who lack discrimination, then our own discriminative faculty becomes weak, and that true friend may pass us by unrecognized.

Discrimination is a quality that is always hidden in a person. Don't you see that an insane person possesses hands and feet but lacks discrimination? Discrimination is a subtle essence within you. Yet, day and night you have been occupied with nurturing the physical form that does not know right from wrong. Why have you devoted all your energies to looking after the physical, entirely neglecting that subtle essence? The physical exists through that es-

sence, but that essence in no way depends on the physical.

The light that shines through the windows of the eyes and ears-if those windows did not exist, the light would not stop. It would find other windows to shine through. If you bring a lamp before the sun, do you say, "I see the sun by means of this lamp"? God forbid! If you did not bring the lamp, the sun would still shine. What need is there for a lamp?

This is the danger in associating with kings. It is not that you may lose your life-we must lose our life in the end anyway, whether today or tomorrow does not matter. The danger arises from the fact that when kings enter upon the scene, and the spell of their influence gains strength, becoming like a great lamp, the person who keeps company with them, claims their friendship, and accepts money from them will inevitably speak in accordance with their desires. That person will listen to the kings' mundane views with the utmost attention, and will not be able to deny them.

That is where the danger lies, it leads to a fading respect for the true source. When you cultivate the interest of kings, that other interest which is fundamental to the spiritual life becomes a stranger to you. The more you proceed down the path of kings, the more that direction where the Beloved dwells becomes lost. The more you make your peace with worldly people, the more the Beloved turns away from you. Going in their direction renders you sub-

ject to their rule. Once you have turned down their path, in the end God gives them power over you.

It is a pity to reach the ocean, and to be satisfied with a little pitcherful from the sea. After all, there are pearls in the sea, and from the sea come a myriad of precious things. What is the value in just taking water? What pride can intelligent people have in that? This world is a mere foam fleck of the True Sea. That Ocean is the science of the saints, and within that Water is the Pearl Itself.

This world is but foam full of floating jetsam. Yet, through the turning of the waves, and the rhythmic surging of the sea in constant motion, this foam takes on a certain beauty. But this beauty is a borrowed thing coming from elsewhere. It is a false coin that sparkles to the eye.

People are the astrolabe of God, but it requires an astronomer to use the astrolabe. If a vegetable-seller or a greengrocer should find the astrolabe, what good would it do them? From that astrolabe, what could they know of the movements of the circling stars and the positions of the planets, their influences and so forth? But in the hands of the astronomer, the astrolabe becomes truly valuable.

Just as this copper astrolabe reflects the movements of the heavens like a mirror, so the human being is the astrolabe of God.

"We have honored the children of Adam."

Those who have been moved by God to see the one reality and learn Its ways through the astrolabe of

their own being, behold moment by moment, flash by flash, the testament of God. Indeed, it is an infinite beauty that never leaves their mirror.

God has servants who cloak themselves in a wisdom, knowingness and grace invisible to others. Out of their excessive jealousy and love for God these servants cloak themselves, just like Mutanabbi says of beautiful women:

Figured silks they wore, not to beautify But to guard
their beauty from lustful eyes.

Discourse 4

Someone said: "There is something I have forgotten." Rumi replied: There is one thing in this world that must never be forgotten. If you were to forget all else, but did not forget that, then you would have no reason to worry. But if you performed and remembered everything else, yet forgot that one thing, then you would have done nothing whatsoever.

It is just as if a king sent you to the country to carry out a specific task. If you go and accomplish a hundred other tasks, but do not perform that particular task, then it is as though you performed nothing at all. So, everyone comes into this world for a particular task, and that is their purpose. If they do not perform it, then they will have done nothing.

All things are assigned a task. The heavens send rain and light for the herbs of the field to germinate and spring into life. The earth receives the seeds and bears fruit, it accepts and reveals a hundred thousand marvels too numerous to tell. The mountains give forth mines of gold and silver. All these things the heavens, the earth and the mountains do, yet they do not perform that one thing; that particular task is performed by us.

"We offered thé Trust to the heavens,

The earth and the mountains,
They refused to carry it and were afraid of it,
But humans carried it.
Surely they are foolish and sinful."

So, people are given a task, and when they perform it all their sinfulness and foolishness is dissolved.

You say, "Look at all the work I do accomplish, even if I do not perform that task." You weren't created for those other tasks! It is just as if you were given a sword of priceless Indian steel, such as can only be found in the treasuries of kings, and you were to treat it as a butcher's knife for cutting up putrid meat, saying, "I am not letting this sword stand idle, I am using it in so many useful ways." Or it is like taking a solid gold bowl to cook turnips in, when a single grain of that gold could buy a hundred pots. Or it is as if you took a Damascene dagger of the finest temper to hang a broken gourd from, saying, "I am making good use of it. I am hanging a gourd on it. I am not letting this dagger go to waste." How foolish that would be! The gourd can hang perfectly well from a wooden or iron nail whose value is a mere farthing, so why use a dagger valued at a hundred pounds?

A poet once said:

You are more precious than heaven and earth.
What more can I say?
You do not know your own worth.

God says, "I will buy you...your moments, your breaths, your possessions, your lives. Spend them on Me. Turn them over to Me, and their price is divine

freedom, grace and wisdom. This is your worth in My eyes." But if we keep our life for ourself, then we lose what treasures we have been granted. Like the person who hammered the dagger, worth a hundred pounds into the wall to hang a gourd upon, their great fortune was reduced to a nail.

Still you offer another excuse, saying, "But I apply myself to lofty tasks. I study law, philosophy, logic, astronomy, medicine and the rest."

Well, for whose sake but your own do you study these? If it is law, it is so nobody can steal a loaf from you, strip you of your clothes, or kill you- in short, it is for your own security. If it is astronomy, the phases of the spheres and their influence upon the earth, whether they are light or heavy, portending tranquility or danger, all these things are concerned with your own situation, serving your own ends. If it is medicine, it is related to your own health and also serves you. When you consider this matter well, the root of all your studies is yourself. All these lofty tasks are but branches of you.

If these subjects are filled with so many marvels and worlds of knowledge without end, consider what worlds you pass through who are the root! If your branches have their laws, their medicines, their histories, think of what transpires within you who are the source; what spiritual laws and medicines affect your inward future and fate, what histories portray your struggles of the heart!

For Soul there is other food besides this food of sleeping and eating, but you have forgotten that other food. Night and day you nourish only your body. Now, this body is like a horse, and this lower world is its stable. The food the horse eats is not the food of the rider. You are the rider and have your own sleeping and eating, your own enjoyment. But since the animal has the upper hand, you lag behind in the horse's stable. You cannot be found among the ranks of kings and princes in the eternal world. Your heart is there, but since your body has the upper hand, you are subject to its rule and remain its prisoner.

When Majnun, as the story goes, was making for his beloved Laila's home, as long as he was fully conscious he drove his camel in that direction. But when for a moment he became absorbed in the thought of Laila and forgot his camel, the camel turned in its tracks toward the village where its foal was kept. On coming to his senses, Majnun found that he had gone back a distance of two day's journey. For three months he continued this way, coming no closer to his goal. Finally he jumped off the camel, saying, "This camel is the ruin of me!" and continued on foot, singing:

My camel's desire is now behind,
My own desire is before.
Our purposes were crossed,
We can agree no more.

Burhan al-Din was once greeted by someone, who said, "I have heard praises of you sung by friends."

Burhan al-Din answered, "Wait until I meet your friends to see whether they know me well enough to praise me. If they know me only by word of mouth, then they do not truly know me. For words do not endure. Syllables and sounds do not endure. This body, these lips and this mouth will not endure. All these things are mere accidents of the moment. But if they know me by my works, and they know my essential self, then I know they are able to praise me, and that praise will go where it belongs."

This is like the story they tell of a certain king. This king entrusted his son to a team of learned scholars. In due course, they taught him the sciences of astrology, geomancy, and the interpretation of signs, until he became a complete master, despite his utter stupidity and dullness of wit.

One day the king took a ring in his fist and put his son to the test.

"Come, tell me what I am holding in my fist."

"What you are holding is round, yellow, inscribed and hollow," the prince answered.

"You have given all the signs correctly," the king said. "Now say what it is."

"It must be a sieve." the prince replied.

"What?" cried the king. "You know all the minute details, which would baffle the minds of anyone. How is it that out of all your powerful learning and knowledge, the small point has escaped you that a sieve will not fit in a fist?"

In this same way, the great scholars of the age split hairs on details of all matters. They know perfectly and completely those sciences that do not concern Soul. But as for what is truly of importance and touches us more closely than anything else, namely our own Self, this your great scholars do not know. They make statements about everything, saying, "This is true and that is not true. This is right and that is wrong." Yet, they do not know their own Self, whether it is true or false, pure or impure.

Now being hollow and yellow, inscribed and circular, these features are accidental; cast the ring into the fire and none of them will remain. It becomes its essential self, purified of all appearances. So it is with the knowledge of scholars; what they know has no connection with the essential reality that alone exists when all these "signs" are gone. They speak wisely, expound at great length, and finally pronounce that what the king has in his hand is a sieve. They have no knowledge about the root of the matter: life's purpose.

I am a bird. I am a nightingale. If they say to me, "Make some other kind of sound," I cannot. My tongue is what it is. I cannot speak otherwise. However, those who learn the song of birds are not birds themselves-on the contrary, they are the enemies of birds and their captors. They sing and whistle so others will take them for birds. Ask them to produce a different sound and they can do so, because that sound is merely assumed by them. It is not truly their

own. Like the scholars, they are able to sing other songs because they have learned to rob those songs, and to show off a different tune stolen from every breast.

Discourse 5

The Amir, surprised by an unexpected visit from Rumi, said: "Master, how gracious of you to honor me in this way. I never expected this. It never even entered my mind that I could be worthy of such an honor. By rights I should be standing night and day in the ranks and company of your servants and attendants. I'm not even worthy of that. How gracious this is!"

Rumi said: It is all because of your lofty spiritual aspirations. The higher and greater your rank and the more you become occupied with important, exalted worldly affairs, the more you consider yourself to have fallen short of your spiritual purpose. You are not satisfied with what you have achieved, thinking that you have too many obligations. Since none of these attainments can blind you from that divine attainment, my heart is moved to serving you. And yet for all that, still, I wanted to pay you formal honor as well.

Form too possesses great importance. No, much more than importance-it is of true sub-stance. Just as the body will fail if it lacks a heart, so too it fails without a skin. If you plant a seed with no husk, it cannot grow, but if you bury it in the earth with its

shell, then it germinates and becomes a great tree. So, form is a great and necessary principle, and without it our task fails and our purpose is not attained. Yes, this principle is reality in the eyes of those who know reality and have become reality!

A dervish once entered the presence of a king. The king addressed him, "Oh, ascetic."

"You are the ascetic," the dervish answered.

"How can I be an ascetic," the king demanded, "since the whole world belongs to me?"

"Ah, you see things the opposite of what they are," replied the dervish. "This world and the next and all that there is to possess, these all belong to me. I have seized the whole world. It is you who have become satisfied with a mouthful and a rag."

Wherever you turn, there is the Face of God. This Face runs and extends infinitely and forever. True spiritual lovers have sacrificed themselves for the sake of that Face, desiring nothing in return. The rest of the human race are like cattle. Yet, even though they are cattle, still they deserve favor. They may live in the stable, yet they are accepted by the Lord of the stable. If He so desires, He transfers them from this stable into His private pen. So, in the beginning God brought men and women into existence, and then transferred them from the pen of spiritual existence into the world inanimate. Then from the pen of the world inanimate into the vegetable world. Then from vegetable into animal. From animal to human, human to angel, and so on forever. He manifested all

these forms so that you would know His pens are many, and that each one is loftier than the next. God revealed this present world so that you could accept the other stages that lie ahead. He did not reveal it so that you would say, "This is all there is." The masters of crafts demonstrate their abilities and arts so their apprentices will find faith in them, and will believe in the other arts they have not yet demonstrated. A king bestows robes of honor and lavishes kindness on his subjects because they look forward to receiving other gifts from him, and hang hopefully upon future purses of gold. He does not grant these things for them to say, "This is all there is. The king will not give out any other blessings," and so make do with that amount. If the king knows any subjects are going to say that, and take such gifts for granted, he will never bestow any blessings whatsoever upon them.

The ascetic is one who sees the hereafter, while the worldling sees only the stable. But the chosen ones of God, who have true knowledge, see neither the hereafter nor the stable. Their eyes are fixed on the first principle, the source of all things. When the chosen one sows wheat they know that wheat will grow, because they see the end from the beginning. So it is with barley and rice and all things-seeing the beginning, their eyes are not fixed on the end. They know the conclusion from the start. Such men and women are rare.

It is pain that guides us in every enterprise. Until there is an ache within, a passion and a yearning for that thing arising within us, we will never strive to attain it. Without pain it remains beyond our reach, whether it is success in this world or salvation in the next, whether we aim at becoming a merchant or a king, a scientist or an astronomer. It was not until the pains of birth manifested in Mary that she made for the tree. Those pangs drove her to the tree, and the tree that was withered became fruitful.

We are like that story of Mary in the Koran. Every one of us has a Jesus within, but until the pangs manifest, our Jesus is not born. If the pangs never come, then our child rejoins its origin by the same secret path through which it came, leaving us empty, without the birth of our true self.

Your inward soul is hungry.
Your outward flesh is over fed.
The devil has gorged to sickness.
The king begs even for bread.
The cure is found while Jesus is here on earth!
But once he returns to heaven,
all hope will have fled.

Discourse 6

Rumi said: These words are for the sake of those who need words to understand. But as for those who understand without words, what use have they for speech? The heavens and earth are words to them, sent forth themselves from the Word of God. Whoever hears a whisper, what need have they for shouting and screaming?

An Arabic speaking poet once came into the presence of a king. Now the king was a Turk, and did not even know Persian. The poet had composed in his honor some brilliant verses in Arabic, and had brought these with him. When the king had taken his seat on the throne and the courtiers were all present and duly stationed, commanders and ministers each in their place, the poet rose to his feet and began to recite his poem. At every passage deserving applause the king nodded his head, while at every passage provoking astonishment he looked amazed. Similarly, he responded to every passage expressing submission. The courtiers were astounded.

"Our king did not know a word of Arabic," they murmured amongst themselves. "How is it that he nodded his head so correctly? He must have known Arabic all these years and kept it hidden from us. If

we have ever uttered incivilities in Arabic, then woe is us!"

Now the king had a favorite slave. So the courtiers assembled together and gave the slave a horse, a mule, and a sum of money, and they promised to give him this much again. "Just find out whether or not the king knows Arabic," they said to him. "If he does not, how was it that he nodded just at the right places? Was it a miracle? Was it divine inspiration?"

Finally one day the slave found his opportunity. The king was out hunting, and the slave perceived that he was in a good mood, since the hunt had gone well. So he asked the king point blank. The king burst out laughing.

"By God, I don't know Arabic," he said. "As for nodding and applauding, I knew of course what the poet's object was in composing that poem, and so I nodded and applauded."

So it was realized that the root of the matter was the purpose desired; the poem itself was merely the branch of that purpose. If it had not been for that purpose, the poet would never have composed that poem.

If our real purpose is kept in view, duality vanishes. Duality shows the branches, but the root is one. It is the same with Sufi sheikhs. Although to outward appearance they have various styles of teaching and differ widely in their social standing, even in their action and words, yet from the standpoint of their

purpose they all have one goal, namely the quest for God.

Take the case of the wind. When it blows through a house it lifts the edges of the carpet, and the rugs flap and move about. It whisks sticks and straws into the air, ruffles the surface of the pool until it looks like a coat of mail, sets trees and twigs and leaves a-dancing. All those conditions appear distinct and different, yet from the standpoint of the object, the root and reality, they are one thing-the movement of the wind.

Someone said: "I have neglected that true purpose." Rumi replied: When this thought enters a person's mind and they criticize themself, saying, "What am I about, and why do I do these things?" When this happens, it is a sure proof that God loves them and cares for them. "Love continues so long as reprimands continue," said the poet. We may reprimand our friends, but we never reprimand a stranger. Now there are levels of reprimand. When a person is stung by it and sees the truth in it, that is a sign that God loves them and cares for them. But if the reprimand flies by that person without causing any pain at all, then this is no sign of love. When a carpet is beaten to get rid of the dust, intelligent people do not call that a reprimand. But if a woman beats her own darling child, then that is called a reprimand and is a proof of her love. Therefore, as long as you find pain and regret within yourself, that is a proof of God's love and guidance.

If you find fault in your brother or sister, the fault you see in them is within yourself. The true Sufi is like a mirror where you see your own image, for "The believer is a mirror of their fellow believers." Get rid of those faults in yourself, because what bothers you in them bothers you in yourself. An elephant was led to a well to drink. Seeing itself in the water, it shied away. It thought it was shying away from another elephant. It did not realize it was shying away from its own self.

All evil qualities-oppression, hatred, envy, greed, mercilessness, pride-when they are within yourself, they bring no pain. When you see them in another, then you shy away and feel the pain. We feel no disgust at our own scab and abscess. We will dip our infected hand into our food and lick our fingers without turning in the least bit squeamish. But if we see a tiny abscess or half a scratch on another's hand, we shy away from that person's food and have no stomach for it whatsoever. Evil qualities are just like scabs and abscesses; when they are within us they cause no pain, but when we see them even to a small degree in another, then we feel pain and disgust.

Just as you shy away from your brother or sister, so you should excuse them for shying away from you. The pain you feel comes from those faults, and they see the same faults. The seeker of truth is a mirror for their neighbors. But those who cannot feel the sting of truth are not mirrors to anyone but themselves.

A certain king was sitting, dejected, on the bank of a river. The generals were nervous and afraid of him. His face would not clear up no matter what they tried. Now he had a jester whom he treated as a great favorite. The generals promised the jester a certain sum of money if he could make the king laugh. So the jester approached the king, but despite all his efforts the king would not so much as look at him. The king kept staring into the river and did not lift his head at all.

"What do you see in the water?" the jester asked the king.

"I see the husband of an unfaithful wife," the king replied.

"King of the world," the jester said, "your slave is also not blind."

So it is in your own case. If you see something in your fellow that pains you, after all they also are not blind. They see exactly what you see.

In God's presence two I's cannot exist. You cannot know your self and God's Self; either die before God, or God will die before you so that duality will not remain. But as for God's dying, that is both impossible and inconceivable, for God is the Living, the Immortal. So gracious is He that if it were at all possible He would die for your sake. Since that is not possible, then you must die so that God can reveal Itself to you, and duality can vanish.

Tie two birds together, and despite their familiarity and the fact that their two wings have been changed

to four, they will not fly. That is because duality exists. But let one bird give up its life and the other- even though tied to the first-will fly, because duality has vanished.

Shams-I Tabriz was a servant of God who had the power to sacrifice himself for the sake of a friend. He prayed to God for that friend, but God did not accept his petition. "I do not want you to help him," came a voice. Shams, that son of the Sun [Shams-I Tabriz means literally Sun of Tabriz,] persisted and would not cease his requests, saying, "O God, you have implanted this desire for him, and it will not leave me." Finally a voice came saying, "Do you desire that this should come to pass? Then sacrifice your self, and become nothing. Do not wait, and leave this world behind." "Lord," Shams answered, "I am content." So he did; he gambled away his life for the sake of that Friend, and his desire was accomplished. [The friend in this story is Rumi himself. Shams was chased away by jealous followers of Rumi, but Rumi sent for Shams and Shams eventually returned. It is said that those jealous followers, including one of Rumi's own sons, later murdered Shams. Rumi's search for the missing Shams, only to find the One he sought for within himself, is the source of many of Rumi's poems.]

If a servant of God can possess such grace as to sacrifice his life, of which one day's portion is worth the life of all the world from first to last, does not the Source of that grace also possess this love? It would

be absurd to think otherwise. But since it is not possible for God to pass away, at least you can. A fool came and sat in a seat above one of the great saints. What difference does it make to the saints whether such a person is above or below the lamp? If the lamp wants to be on high, it does not desire that for its own sake. Its purpose is for the benefit of others, so they can enjoy their share of the light. Wherever the lamp may be, whether below or above, it is still the lamp of the Eternal Sun. If the saint seeks worldly rank and office, it is for this purpose: They desire to snare those worldlings, who do not have the vision to see their true elevation, with a trap of worldly rank. Through this they may find their way to the higher worlds, and fall into the trap of divine grace.

In this same way, the Prophet, Mohammed did not conquer Mecca and the surrounding lands because he was in need of them. He conquered in order to give life and grant light to all people. "This is a hand accustomed to give, it is not accustomed to take." The saints beguile people in order to bestow gifts on them, not to take anything away.

When someone lays a trap and catches little birds to eat and sell, that is called cunning. But if a king lays a trap to capture an untutored and worthless hawk, having no knowledge of its own true nature, to train it to his own forearm so that it may become ennobled, that is not called cunning. Though to outward appearance it is cunning, yet it is known to be the very acme of caring and generosity, restoring the

dead to life, converting the base stone into a ruby, and far more than that. If the hawk knew for what reason the king wanted to capture it, it would not require any bait. It would search for the trap with soul and heart, and would fly to the king's hand.

People only listen to the outward significance of the saints' words. They say, "We've heard plenty of this. Our hearts are stuffed full of words of this kind." God says, "God forbid that you should be full of them! You are full of your own whisperings and vain conceits. You are full of illusion and greed. Nay, you are full of cursing."

If only they were empty of such ravings! Then they would be open to receive these words. But they are not open to receive them. God has set a seal upon their ears and eyes and hearts. Their eyes see things the opposite of what they are; they hear wisdom as gibberish and raving. Their hearts have been transformed into a home of self-love and vanity. A winter's tangle of dark shapes and pride has possessed them. Their hearts are hardened with ice and frost.

"God has set a seal on their hearts

And their hearing, And on their eyes is a covering."

How likely is it that such people could be full of these true words? They have never caught so much as a whiff of them. They have never tasted a drop in all their lives-neither they nor those they worship, nor their miserable household. God shows a pitcher to everyone. To some It shows the pitcher full of water, and they drink until they are sated. But to some God

shows it empty. What thanks can someone give for an empty pitcher? Only those, whom God shows the pitcher full, find thanks for this gift.

Discourse 7

The son of the Amir entered. Rumi said: Your father is always occupied with God. His faith is overwhelming, and reveals itself in his words. One day your father said, "The people of Rum have urged me to give my daughter in marriage to the Tartars, so that our religion may become one, and this new religion of Muslimdom can disappear."

I said, "When has religion ever been one? There have always been two or three, and they have always had war and fighting between them. How do you expect to make religion one? It will be one only in the next world, at the resurrection. As for this present world, it isn't possible here, for here each religion has a different desire and design. Here unity is impossible. It will be possible only at the resurrection, when humanity becomes one and all people fix their eyes on one place and all have one ear and one tongue."

Within us are many things. There is mouse in us, and there is bird. The bird carries the cage upwards, while the mouse drags it down. A hundred thousand different wild beasts are together within us, but they are all converging on that moment when the mouse will renounce its mouse-hood and the bird its bird-hood, and all become one. For the goal is neither

going up or down. When the goal shows itself clearly, it will be neither above nor below.

A woman lost something. She looks left and right, in front and behind. Once she has found that thing she no longer searches above and below, left and right, in front or behind. All at once she becomes calm and collected. Similarly, on the resurrection day all people will be of one eye, tongue, ear and understanding.

When ten friends share a garden or a shop in common, they speak as one, they plan as one, and their work is with one thing since their objective is the same. So, on the resurrection day, since the affair of all will be with God, they will all be one.

In this world everyone is preoccupied with a separate affair. One is in love with women, one is in love with wealth, another is engaged in acquiring possessions, another in acquiring knowledge. Everyone believes that their cure, their joy, their pleasure and comfort can be found in that one thing. And that is a Divine mercy, because when they search they cannot find, and so they return. After they have waited a while, they say again, "That joy and pleasure must be looked for. Perhaps I didn't try hard enough. I will search again." Then they look again, but still they cannot find their desire. So they continue, until that time when Truth removes Its veil. Then they know.

But God has certain servants who know even before the resurrection. Ali [cousin and son-in-law of Mohammed] said, "Even if the veil was removed, my

faith would not increase." That is to say, "Even when the body is gone and the resurrection appears, my certainty can become no greater." This is like a group of people at prayer on a dark night; they turn their faces in every direction, being unable to see. When day comes they all turn themselves around, except for that one individual who through the night was facing towards Mecca. Why should that individual turn around? So, those special servants of God keep their faces towards the One even in the night, and have turned their faces away from all else. Therefore, for them, the resurrection is already manifest and present.

There is no end to words, but they are given according to the capacity of the seeker.

Wisdom is like the rain. Its supply is unlimited, but it comes down according to what the occasion requires-in winter and spring, in summer and autumn, always in due measure, more or less, but the source of that rain is the oceans itself, which has no limits. Druggists put sugar or drugs in a twist of paper, but sugar is not limited by the amount in the paper. The stocks of sugar and the stocks of drugs are unlimited and unbounded; how can a piece of paper contain them?

Some people uttered taunts at Mohammed, saying, "Why does the Koran come down upon you word by word? Why not chapter by chapter?" Mohammed answered, "What do these fools say? If it were to

come down upon me all at once, I would dissolve and vanish away."

Those who truly understand a little, understand much; of one thing, many things; of one line, whole volumes. It is like when a group is seated listening to a story, but one woman knows all the circumstances, having been there when it occurred. From the first hint she understands it all. She turns pale, then crimson, changing from one feeling to another. The others understand only as much as they hear, since they do not know what really happened. But the one who knows understands the whole story from even a few words.

To return: When you come to the druggist, they have sugar in abundance. But they see how much money you brought, and give accordingly. By "money" is meant sincerity and faith. The words are imparted according to one's sincerity and faith. When you come seeking sugar, they examine your bag to see what its capacity is, then they measure out accordingly, one bushel or two. But if someone brings a string of camels, they call the weighmen to be help.

So, someone comes along whom oceans do not satisfy; another finds a few drops enough and any more would be harmful.

This applies not only to the world of ideas, sciences and wisdom. It is true of everything. Property, wealth, gold, all are unbounded and infinite, but they are imparted according to the capacity of the individual. Who could support an endless supply with-

out being driven mad? Do you not see how Majnun and Farhad, and the other famous lovers, took to the mountain and desert for the love of a woman, when they were filled with a passion beyond their power to control? Do you not see how Pharaoh, when empire and wealth were showered upon him without end, laid claim to being a god?

Yes, indeed these people have faith, but they do not know what that faith is in. In the same way a child has faith it will have bread to eat, but they don't know where this bread comes from. It is the same with all things that grow. A tree turns yellow and dry of thirst, but it doesn't know what thirst really is.

Our faith is like a flag. First we set the flag fluttering in the air to proclaim our belief, and then send troops to the foot of that flag from every direction to support and defend it. We send reason, understanding, fury and anger, forbearance and liberality, fear and hope, on and on without end. Whoever looks from afar sees only the flag, but those who see from close at hand know the essences and realities that reside within us.

Someone came in and Rumi said: Where have you been? We have been longing to see you. Why have you stayed away?

The visitor replied, "It was just how things conspired."

Rumi said: We, for our part, have been praying that this conspiracy of things might come to an end. A conspiracy of things that produces separation is an

improper conspiracy. Yes, by God, it too comes from God, and in relation to God is good. It is a true saying, that all things are good and perfect in relation to God, but in relation to us, how can this be true? Fornication and purity, avoiding prayer and praying, unbelief and Islam, idolatry and God's unity-with God all these are good. But to us, fornication and thieving, unbelief and idolatry are bad, while God's unity and prayer are good. Even though in relation to God all are good A king has in his realm prisons and gallows, robes of honor and wealth, estates and attendants in waiting, feasting and celebration, drums and flags. In relation to the king all these things are good. Just as robes of honor are the perfect flourish for his kingdom, in the same way gallows and prisons are perfect ornaments. In relation to him all these things are perfect, but in relation to his people how could robes of honor and the gallows be one and the same?

Discourse 8

Someone asked: "What is greater than prayer?" Rumi said: One answer is that the soul of prayer is greater than prayer, as I have already explained. A second answer is that faith is greater. Prayer is a series of daily actions, while faith is continuous. Prayer can be dropped for a valid reason, or can be postponed, but it is impossible to drop or postpone faith for any excuse. And where prayer without faith gains nothing, as in the case of hypocrites, faith without prayer is valuable. Another point: while the prayer of every religion is each quite different, still, faith does not change from religion to religion. The states that it produces, its place in life, and its effects are the same everywhere.

There are other advantages to faith, but their discovery depends upon the inward awareness of the listener. Each listener is like flour in the hands of a dough-maker. Words are like water sprinkled on the flour according to the moisture needed. But unless the water soaks in, it cannot make dough. A poet said:

My eye is fixed upon another, what shall I do?
Look to yourself, for that eye's light is you.

"My eye is fixed upon another." That means you are seeking something apart from yourself, like the dryness of the flour that longs for water from the dough-maker's hand. "What can I do?" Know that you seek only yourself, that longing is for you. The light you seek is your own light reflected, but you will not escape this blinding glare of the outward lights until your own Inner Light becomes a hundred thousand times greater.

There was once a skinny person, feeble as a sparrow, and exceedingly ugly. He was so ugly that even other ugly people looked on him with contempt and gave thanks to God, though before seeing him they used to complain of their own ugliness. Yet, for all that, he was very rude in his way of speaking and bragged enormously. He was in the court of the king, and his behavior pained the vizier, but the vizier swallowed it down. Then one day the vizier lost his temper.

"People of the court," he shouted. "I picked this creature out of the gutter and nourished him. By eating my bread and sitting at my table, by enjoying my charity and my wealth, and that of my ancestors, he became somebody. Now he has reached the point of saying such things to me!"

"People of the court," cried the man, springing up in the vizier's face, "and nobles and pillars of the state! What he says is quite true. I was nourished by his wealth and charity and that of his ancestors until I grew up, contemptible and crude as you see me. If I had been nourished by someone else's bread and

wealth, surely my appearance, my manners and my worth would have been better than this. He picked me out of the gutter; but all I can say is; Oh, I wish that I were dust. If someone else had picked me out of the gutter, I would not have been such a laughing stock."

The disciple, who is fed at the table of a lover of God, has a clean and true spirit. But those who are nourished by the hands of an imposter and a braggart, learning the science from them, become just like their teacher, contemptible and feeble, weak and unable to make up their minds about anything.

Within our being all sciences were originally joined as one, so that our spirit displayed all hidden things, like clear water shows everything within it-pebbles, broken shards and the like- and reflects the sky above from its surface like a mirror. This is Soul's true nature, without treatment or training. But once Soul has mingled with the earth and its earthly elements, this clarity leaves it and is forgotten. So God sends forth the prophets and saints, like a great translucent ocean that accepts all waters, and yet no matter how dark or dirty are the rivers that pour into it, that ocean remains pure. Then Soul remembers. When it sees its reflection in that unsullied water, it knows for sure that in the beginning it too was pure, and these shadows and colors are mere accidents.

The prophets and the saints, therefore, remind us of our original state; they do not implant anything new. Now, every water, no matter how dark, that recog-

nizes that great water, saying, "I come from this and I belong to this," is truly a part of that ocean. But the dark elements that do not recognize that ocean and believe they are kin to another kind, they make their home with the colors and shadows of the earth.

It was for this reason that the Prophet said, "Now there comes to you a Messenger from amongst yourselves." In other words, the great ocean is that same substance as your own water, it is all from one self and one source. But for those elements that do not feel the attraction of familiarity, this failure does not come from the water itself, but from the pollution in that water. This pollution is mixed in so closely that the water does not know whether its own shying away from the ocean comes from itself, or from the essence of that pollution. And so, evil men do not know whether their attraction toward evil springs from their own nature, or from some dark element mingled in.

Every line of poetry the saints and prophets bring forth, every tradition, every verse they write, is like a witness bearing testimony. They bear witness to every situation according to the nature of the situation. In the same way we have two witnesses at the inheritance of a house, two witnesses at the sale of a shop, two witnesses at a marriage. So too, the saints bear witness. The inner form of their testimony is always the same; it is the outer meaning that differs. I pray that God may cause these words to bear witness to God and you alike.

Discourse 9

Someone said: "A man came who wanted to see you. He kept saying, 'I wish I could have seen the Master."

Rumi said: He does not see the Master at this moment because in truth the desire that filled him, namely to see the Master, was a veil hiding the Master. So it is with all desires and affections, all loves and fondnesses that people have for every variety of thing-father, mother, heaven, earth, gardens, palaces, knowledge, things to eat and drink. The lover of God realizes all these desires are truly the desire for God, and they are all veils covering humanity's eyes. When we pass into the next world and behold Reality without these veils, then we realize all those were veils and coverings, and that our true quest in reality is for one thing. All difficulties are then resolved, we hear in our hearts the answer to all questions, and everything is seen clearly face to face.

It is not God's way to answer every problem separately, but with one answer all questions are satisfied. All at once the total struggle is resolved. In the same way, in winter everyone puts on warm clothes and a leather jacket, and then creeps for shelter from the cold. So too all plants, trees, and shrubs, bitten by the

cold, remain without leaves and fruit, storing and hiding their goods and nourishment inwardly so that the grasp of winter will not reach them. When spring, in a single epiphany, answers their requests, then all their various problems, whether human, animal or plant, are resolved, and those secondary symptoms disappear. Then all put forth their heads, and realize the cause of their misery.

God has created these veils for a good purpose. For if God's beauty were displayed without a veil, we would not have the power to endure it. Through the intermediary of these veils we derive life and enjoyment.

Look at the sun. Through its light we can distinguish good from bad, and find warmth. Trees and orchards become fruitful from its heat, and their fruits-unripe, sour and bitter, become mature and sweet. Through its influence, mines of gold and silver, rubies and carnelians are produced. But if the sun were to come nearer it would bring no benefit whatsoever. On the contrary, the whole world and every creature would be burned up and destroyed.

When God reveals Itself through a veil to the mountain, those slopes become fully arrayed in trees and flowers and verdure. However, when God brings revelation without a veil, It destroys the mountain and breaks it into atoms.

Someone asked: "Well, isn't this the same sun in the winter?"

Rumi answered: Our purpose here was to draw a comparison. It is not a matter of atoms, or Adam. Similarity is one thing, comparison is another. Although our mind cannot comprehend that reality, yet how can mind abandon the effort? If our reason gave up the struggle, it would no longer be reason. Reason is that thing that perpetually, night and day, is restless while thinking and struggling, striving to comprehend, even though God is unknowable and incomprehensible.

Reason is like a moth, and the Beloved is like a candle. Whenever the moth dashes itself against the candle, it is consumed and destroyed, but the moth is this way by nature. No matter how much that consuming flame and agony may hurt, the moth cannot fly from the candle. If there were another creature like the moth that could not fly away from the light of the candle, and dashed itself against that light, that would not be a mere comparison, that would be a moth itself. But if the moth dashed itself against the light of the candle and the moth were not consumed, that indeed could not be a candle.

Therefore, the human being who can do without God, lacking even the desire, that is no human being at all. But if they are able to comprehend God, that indeed could not be God. So, the true lover is never free from striving, they revolve restlessly and ceaselessly around the light of God. And God consumes them, making them nothing, destroying the veil of their reason.

Discourse 10

The Amir said to Rumi: "Before you arrived just now, your eldest son, Baha al-Din, excused himself to me, saying, 'My father said that he doesn't want to put you to any trouble when you come to visit him. He says, "I am subject to various states of consciousness. In one state I speak, and in another I do not. In one state I attend to the affairs of others, and in another state I withdraw and go into retreat, while in yet another state I am utterly absorbed and beyond this world. I do not wish the Amir to come when I'm in a state of being that is disagreeable, when I am unable to counsel and converse with him. Therefore, it is better that when I am free and able to attend to my friends and do them some good, that I should go out and visit them.'"'"

The Amir went on: "I answered Baha al-Din, saying, 'I do not come here so that our Master should attend to me and converse with me. My purpose in coming is to have the honor of being amongst the company of his servants.' For example, just now you were preoccupied and did not show yourself until you had kept me waiting for a long time. This was so I would realize how difficult and disagreeable it is if I keep others waiting when they come to my door and I do

not readily admit them. You have made me taste the bitterness of that and have given me a lesson so that I will not act like that with others."

Rumi answered: That's not true. On the contrary, my keeping you waiting is an expression of utmost loving-kindness. Just as God declares, "O my child, I would answer your smallest petition and slightest complaint without delay, if it weren't that the voice of your complaint is so sweet to my ears. My answer lingers unspoken in hopes that you might complain again and again, for the sound of your voice is so sweet to me."

For example, two beggars come to the door of a certain person. One is highly loved and sought after, while the other is disliked. The owner of the house says to a slave, "Give that hated one a piece of bread quickly and without delay, so he will leave right away." To the other beloved beggar the owner makes promises, saying, "The bread is not yet baked. Wait patiently until the bread is properly cooked and baked."

My greater desire is to see my friends, to gaze my fill upon them and they on me. For when friends see deeply into one another here, below, and they are raised into the other world after become very familiar here, they quickly recognize one another there. Knowing how closely they were together in the world of mortality, their reuniting brings great joy.

For all too quickly we lose our friends. Do you not see how in this mortal world you become the friend

and darling of some person, and they become the very Joseph of beauty in your eyes. Then, on account of a single shameful act they vanish from your sight, and you lose them completely? That Joseph-like form is changed into a wolf. This very same one you once saw as Joseph you now see as a wolf. Yet, their actual form has not changed, but is still the same as it always was. By that one accidental act you lost them. Tomorrow, when this present essence is changed into another essence, since you never really knew that person deeply, and never penetrated thoroughly into their essence, how are you going to recognize them? The lesson to be learned from this is that we must see one another very well indeed. We must pass beyond the good and bad qualities that are present temporarily in everyone, and must enter into the other's very essence. We must see with exceptional clarity that these qualities people observe in one another are not their original qualities.

The story is told of a man, who said, "I know that fellow very well. I will give his distinguishing mark." His friends said, "Please do." The man answered, "He was a muleteer of mine. He had two black cows." People talk in this same way. "I consider So-and-so my friend. I know them." Yet every distinguishing mark they give is just like the two black cows. Those are not distinguishing marks. Those marks are of no use whatever.

So, we must pass beyond the good and evil in others and enter into their essence to see what they really are. That is truly seeing and knowing.

It astonishes me how some people say, "How do saints and lovers of God find love in the eternal world beyond form, space and time? How can they gain strength and help? How are they affected by things without body or shape?"

Is not all life, night and day, engaged with these very things? One person loves another person and derives help through that love. They find care and grace, kindness and knowledge, happiness and sorrow. All these belong to that formless world. Moment by moment they receive benefits from these abstractions and are affected by them. However, this doesn't surprise the doubters. Yet they are amazed that saints can find love in the invisible worlds, and derive help without form.

Once there was a philosopher who denied this reality. One day he became so sick he could not leave his bed, and his illness dragged on a long time. A certain theologian went to visit him.

"What are you seeking?" the theologian asked.

"Health," said the philosopher.

"Tell me how this health is shaped, so that I may find it for you." "It has no shape," said the philosopher. "It is indescribable."

"If it is indescribable, then how can you look for it?" the theologian demanded.

"All I know," answered the philosopher, "is that when health arrives I grow in strength. I become plump, fresh and alive."

"From illness we learn of health," said the theologian.

"From what is describable we learn of what is indescribable. Now abandon your doubting ways and I will return you to your vital self."

Though spiritual truth is inscrutable, still we all benefit from it through the embodiment of form. Just as you see the changes brought by the stars, moon and sun turning in the sky, the rain from clouds in due season, summer and winter, and all the transformations of time. You see all these things happen, and know that it is right and in accordance with wisdom. But how does that distant cloud know it is necessary to rain at its appointed time? Or how does this earth, when it receives a seed, know to return it tenfold? Well, Someone does this. Behold that Someone through the embodiment of this world, and find nourish- ment. Just as you use the body of another person to contact their essence, use the embodiment of this world to touch That reality.

When the Prophet was transported out of himself and spoke, he used to say, "God says." Now, from the standpoint of embodiment, it was his tongue that spoke; but he wasn't there at all. That speaker was greater than he was. Mohammed, knowing himself to be ignorant and without knowledge of such words, when he heard the wisdom coming through his own lips, he realized that he was no longer what

he had been. Something greater moved him. He reported stories about past people and prophets who lived thousands of years before, and he told what would come to pass even to the end of the world. His being was but a thing of years. A mortal being surely can't describe such things. How can a creature born in time give information about the eternal? And so it became known that it was not he who was speaking. God was speaking.

God is wholly free of form and words. Its speech is beyond letters and voice. Yet, It delivers Its message by any letters and voice and tongue It desires.

People have carved the figures of men, women and birds of stone along the banks of pools on the highways and in the caravansaries, and through the mouths of those statues water pours into the pool. Anyone with any sense knows that this water does not begin in the mouth of a stone bird, it comes from some other source.

If you want to get to know people, engage them in speech. By their words you will know them. If they are imposters, even if someone told them that people can be recognized by their words and they watch their words carefully to avoid being caught, still, in the end you will come to understand who they are.

This is illustrated by the story of the child and her mother. A child in the desert said to her mother, "On dark nights a horrible demon appears to me, and I am terribly afraid."

"Don't be afraid," said her mother. "The next time you see that form, attack it bravely. Then you see clearly that it is nothing but a fantasy."

"But mother," said the child, "what if the horrible demon's mother has given him similar advice? What shall I do if she has taught him, saying, 'Don't give in, so she will think you are real and powerful. And don't say a word, so that you won't be exposed?' How shall I recognize him then?"

"Keep silent, yield to his form as it is, and wait with patience," her mother answered. "Sooner or later some word will leap from his mouth. Or if it does not, from your own heart some words will spring forth unconsciously, or into your mind some thoughts or ideas will spring up, so that out of those thoughts you will know him for what he is. For this is how he has affected you. This is a reflection of his true self and his real feelings that have sprung up inside of you."

Sheikh Sarrazi was seated one day amongst his disciples. One of the disciples had a longing for some roasted sheep's head. The Sheikh called to his servant, saying, "Bring him some roasted sheep's head."

"How did you know that he wanted roasted sheep's head?" the disciples asked.

"Because it is now thirty years since such desires have filled me," the Sheikh answered. "I have cleansed and purified myself of all desires and have become clear as a polished mirror. When the thought of roasted sheep's head entered my mind, whetted

my appetite and became a desire, I knew it belonged to our friend. For a mirror shows no image of itself. Any image it reflects is the image of another."

A worthy man once shut himself in a cave for forty days discipline, seeking spiritual enlightenment. A voice came to him, saying, "Such a lofty goal will never be attained by forty days discipline. Abandon your cave so the love of a great saint may reach you and your goal can be realized."

"Where shall I find that great one?" the man asked.

"In the congregational mosque," came the answer.

"In such a throng of people, how shall I recognize which one he is?" he inquired.

"Go," said the voice, "he will recognize you and will gaze upon you. The sign that his love has fallen upon you will be when the pitcher drops from your hand and you become unconscious. Then you will know that his gaze has reached you."

The man acted accordingly. He filled a pitcher with water and went around the congregation in the mosque like a water-carrier. He was wandering between the ranks of the worshippers when suddenly he was seized with ecstasy. He uttered a loud cry, and the pitcher fell from his hand. He remained in a corner of the mosque unconscious. All the people left. When he came to his senses he saw that he was alone. He could not see the spiritual king who had gazed upon him, but he had gained his goal.

There are certain lovers of God, who, because of their great majesty and jealousy for God, do not show

themselves openly, but they cause disciples to attain important goals and bestow gifts upon them. Such mighty spiritual saints are rare and precious.

Someone said: "Do the great ones come before you?"

Rumi answered: There is no "before" left to me. It has been a long time since I have had any "before." If they come, they come before an image they believe to be me. Some people said to Jesus, "We will come to your house." Jesus replied, "Where is my house in this world, and how could I have a house?"

It is related that Jesus was wandering in the desert when a great rainstorm broke. He went to take shelter in the den of a jackal, in the corner of its cave, until the rain ceased. A revelation came to him, saying, "Get out of the jackal's den, for the jackal's little ones cannot rest on account of you." He cried aloud, "Lord, the jackal's pups have a shelter, but the son of Mary has no place to call home."

Although the jackal's whelp has a cave to live in, still it has no Beloved to drive it out of its home. But you do have such a One driving you out. If you have no home, what does that matter? The loving-kindness of such a Driver, and the grace from such a robe of honor that singles you out to be driven forth, is worth far more, exceeding a hundred thousand heavens and worlds here and beyond.

After the Amir left, Rumi said: The fact that the Amir came and I didn't show my face at once should not worry him. His purpose in coming was either to pay honor to me or to himself. If it was to pay honor to

me, then the longer he sat and waited, the greater the honor he gained. If, on the other hand, his object was to honor himself and to seek a reward, then since he waited and endured the pain of waiting his reward will be all the greater. In either case his object in coming was realized many times over, so he should feel thankful and fortunate.

Discourse 11

Rumi said: The saying, "Hearts bear witness to one another," refers to a hidden reality. If all reality were openly revealed, what need would there be for words? Similarly, when the heart bears witness, what need is there for the testimony of the tongue?

The Amir said: "Certainly the heart bears witness. But the heart plays one part by itself, the ear another, the eye another, the tongue another. There is need for each one, so that the whole can be realized."

Rumi said: If the heart is totally absorbed, then all the other senses are obliterated in it, and there is no need for the tongue. Take the case of Laila: She was not a spiritual being, but of flesh, fashioned of water and clay. Yet passion for her produced such absorption, and so utterly seized and overwhelmed Majnun, that he had no need to see Laila with his eyes, no need to hear her voice. He could not separate himself from the thought of her, causing him to cry:

Your name is upon my tongue.
Your image is in my sight.
Your memory in my heart,
Where can I send these words I write?

The physical has such power that passion can bring us into a state where we are never apart from our beloved. All our senses are absorbed: sight, hearing, smell and the rest. No sense seeks a separate view, all being united. If each sense plays its part in full, all are immersed in one experience and desire nothing else. Seeking for a separate view proves that one sense has not found its true, whole allotment. It is enjoying an incomplete portion and therefore is not immersed, nor fulfilled. Then the other senses begin seeking their own part, and all become divided.

From the viewpoint of reality, all the senses see one thing, but from the standpoint of outward form they are each different from the other. When one sense is moved to absorption, all the senses become absorbed in it. When a fly flies upward it moves its wings, its head and its whole body sep-arately; but when it is immersed in honey then all its parts are alike-none can move at all.

Absorption is such that whoever enters it is no longer there. They make no more efforts, they cease to act and move. They are immersed in the water. No action is their action; it is the action of the water. But if they flail about in the water with their hands and feet, they are not truly submerged. If they utter a cry, "I am drowning," this too is not absorption.

Take the famous utterance, "I am God." Some people think this is a great pretension, but "I am God" is in fact a great humility. Those who say, instead, "I am a servant of God" believe that two exist, themselves

and God. But those who say, "I am God" have become nothing and have cast themselves to the winds. They say, "I am God" meaning, "I am not, God is all. There is no existence but God. I have lost all separation. I am nothing." In this the humility is greater.

This is what ordinary people don't understand. When they render service in honor of God's glory, their servanthood is still present. Even though it is for the sake of God, they still see themselves and their own actions as well as God-they are not drowned in the water. That person is drowned when no movement, nor any action belongs to them, all their movements spring from the movement of the water.

A lion was chasing a deer, and the deer was fleeing. There were two beings evident: the lion and the deer. But when the lion caught up with the deer, and the deer was overpowered beneath the lion's clutch, and out of terror became unconscious and senseless, collapsing before the lion in that moment only the lion remained. The deer was effaced and no longer existed.

True absorption is when God creates in saints a fear. This is not the fear of men and women who are scared of lions, leopards and death. Rather, it is the fear of separation. This fear is a gift from God, just as security, pleasure and joy, eating and sleeping-all these are gifts from God.

God shows the saints, while they are fully conscious, forms that only they can see. The inner form of the lion, leopard, and fire become visible so they will

know that reality is not of this world, but of the world unseen, projected forth to them. In the same way, they are shown their own Self in magnificent form. Likewise, gardens and rivers, maids of Paradise and palaces, all types of food and drink, robes of honor, fleet steeds, cities, castles and every kind of marvel-they know these are not of this world. God shows and reveals these secrets before their eyes. Thus they come to know with certainty that fear of separation comes from God, as do security, comfort and all spiritual displays.

Now this fear of separation does not resemble the fears that most men and women know, because it is a result of revelation and experience. God clearly shows the saint that all things belong to God. The philosophers may know this, but they know it by intellectual proof, and proof is not permanent. The pleasure that comes from proof will not last. When the memory of the proof passes, its warmth and thrill pass away as well.

Thus, we know by proof that this house had a builder. We know by proof that this builder had eyes and was not blind, had power and was not powerless, was living and not dead, and existed before the house was built. All these facts we know, but we know them by proof. Such proof is not permanent, and is soon forgotten. Lovers of God, however, being absorbed in God, have come to know the Builder and have seen with the eye of knowingness. They have eaten bread and salt together, and mingled the two.

The Builder is never absent from their heart and their gaze. Men and women such as this pass away in God. With them, sin is not sin, and crime is not crime, since they are absorbed.

A certain king ordered his slaves, every one, to take in their hand a golden cup to greet a guest. His favorite slave was also commanded to take a cup. When the king showed his face, that special slave, on beholding the king, lost control of himself and was overwhelmed. The cup fell from his hand and was shattered. When the other slaves saw this they said, "Perhaps we should do this as well," and they cast down their cups deliberately.

"Why did you do that?" the king scolded them.

"He was your favorite, and that was what he did," they replied.

"Fools!" the king cried out. "He didn't do that. I did it."

To outward eyes, all of the slaves were sinful. But that one act was the very acme of obedience. Indeed, it transcended obedience and sin. Of them all, the true lover was that one slave. The others were but followers of the king. Thus, they followed that slave, since he had become the essence of the king, only outwardly wearing the form of slavery. He was filled with the beauty of the king.

God declares, "If it weren't for you, I would never have created the heavens." This is the same as "I am God." It means, "I created the heavens for I love you

as Myself." This is "I am God" in another language and another tongue.

Though the words of the great saints appear in a hundred different forms, since God is one and the Way is one, how can their words be different? Though their teachings appear to contradict, their meaning is one. Separation exists in their outward form only; in inner purpose they all agree.

A prince orders a tent to be stitched. One person twists the rope, another strikes the pegs, another weaves the cloth, another stitches, another rends, another uses a needle. Though to outward appearance they are diverse and different, in inner purpose they are united and performing a single task.

So it is with the affairs of this world. When you look at it carefully, all are doing God's service; reprobate and righteous, sinner and disciple, devil and angel. For example, the king wants to test and try his slaves so the steadfast can be sorted from the weak-hearted, the loyal from the traitor, the faithful from the fake. If he did not have tempters and provokers, how could he test his slaves' loyalty? So, the tempters and provokers are serving the king, since it is by the king's will that they act. He sends a wind to show the difference between the stable and the unstable, to separate the gnat from the sparrow-hawk, so the gnat will vanish and the sparrow-hawk remain.

A certain king ordered a slavegirl to adorn herself and offer herself to hiś slaves, so their loyalty could

be revealed. Though the girl's action appears sinful outwardly, in reality she is doing the king's work.
The great saints have seen for themselves, not by proof and rote, but face to face and unveiled, that all people-good or evil-are obedient servants of God. Nothing exists that does not proclaim God's praise. Therefore, to the saints, this world itself is the resurrection, since the resurrection means all people serving God and doing no other work but God's work. These saints perceive this truth even here below, for even were the veil removed they would not increase in their certainty.
All may be servants, but some have been raised above others in their closeness to God. To those who are absorbed, all differences are lost. To those who have not yet arrived, many stages appear between one and another.
Let me cite a parallel. A gardener planted a tree, and the tree bore fruit. Surely, this tree that bore fruit is better than a hundred trees that are barren. It is possible those other trees may never bear at all, since there are many stages of growth where disease might attack. A pilgrim who reach- es the Kaaba is better than the pilgrim who is still travelling in the desert. The one in the desert fears they may not pass the many landmarks and reach the Kaaba, while the former has already reached their destination. One certainty is better than a hundred doubts.
The Amir said: "Those who have not arrived still have hope."

Rumi answered: What is the hopeful person compared to one who has arrived? There is a vast difference between fear and attainment. Why should I speak of such a difference when it is obvious to all? What I am speaking about is attainment, since there are many differences between the stations of attainment.

It is possible to indicate the various stages of fear and the stations of fear, but the stations of attainment have no indication. In the world of fear everyone decides what they will devote to honor God. One person gives through physical efforts, another donates their wealth, another sacrifices their life. One worships with fasting, another with prayer, another by ten prostrations, another by a hundred. These stages are very dif- ferent and can easily be distinguished. In the same manner there are stages of travel from Konya to Caesarea that are distinct and well-known: One must pass Qaimaz, Uprukh, Sultan, and so forth. But the stages by sea from Antalya to Alexandria are without landmarks. The ship's captain knows the signs, but they are not shared with landsmen since landsmen cannot understand.

The Amir said: "But even speaking about it imparts some benefit. We may not know everything, yet still we learn a little, and can find out and guess the rest."

Rumi replied: Yes indeed, by God! Someone sits wakeful through the dark night, thinking of some way to find the day. Though they do not know how to get there, still, in waiting for daylight, the day

approaches. Another person is travelling by caravan upon a dark night in a storming rain. They do not know where they have gone, which way they are passing, or what distance they have covered, but when day comes they see the results of that travelling and go on from there. Whoever labors for the glory of God, though both their eyes are sealed, their labor is not lost. Even an atom's weight of good is not lost. Though all within is dark and veiled, and they do not see how far they have progressed, still in the end they will know. "This world is the seedplot of the world to come." Whatever they sow here, they will reap in the next world.

Jesus laughed a lot. John wept a lot. John said to Jesus, "You have become exceedingly carefree against all the subtle deceits, that you laugh so much." Jesus replied, "You have become exceedingly unmindful of the subtle, mysterious, wonderful graces and loving kindness of God, that you weep so much." One of God's saints was present at this incident. He asked God, "Which of these two has the higher station?" God answered, "He who thinks better of Me." In other words, "I come when you think of Me. Each person has an image and an idea of Me. Whatever picture he forms of Me, there I am. I fill that picture where God dwells. I care nothing for that point of view where God does not exist. Cleanse your thoughts, O human, for they are My abode and dwelling place."

Now test yourself as to weeping and laughter, fasting and prayer, solitude and company, and the rest. Which of these is more profitable to you? Whichever brings you straighter on the road and gains you the greatest advancement, choose that task. Take counsel from your heart, even though others may disagree. The truth is within you. Compare it with what others say. When they agree, then follow that course. The physician comes to someone who is sick and questions the inward doctor; for within you there is a doctor, namely your natural temperament, instincts and inclinations. Therefore the external physician questions it: "This food that you ate, how was it? Was it light? Was it heavy? How was your sleep?" From what the inward doctor answers, the external physician makes their prescription. Therefore the root of the matter is the inward doctor; the patient's own response. When this inner doctor is feeble and its temperament is corrupt, the sick person sees things incorrectly and gives skewed indications. They say that sugar is bitter, vinegar is sweet.

Therefore they need the external physician to guide them until their own instinct is restored. After that they consult only their own inward doctor to find the counsel they need.

We have a similar doctor within our spiritual being. When this higher Self is feeble, our inward senses perceive falsely, and whatever we follow is contrary to the truth. So the saints are physicians who guide a person until their instinct is restored to its right bal-

ance, and their religion and their heart have gathered strength.

"Show me things as they truly are." Humanity is a mighty volume. Within the people of this world all things are written, but veils and darkness do not allow men and women to read the knowledge within themselves. The veils and darknesses are those many preoccupations, worldly desires and thoughts of every kind. Yet, though they are wrapped in darkness and are hidden by so many veils, they can still read something and therefore learn. Consider when these darknesses and veils are removed, what they will learn then, and what varieties of knowledge they will discover within!

After all, all these trades and professions-tailoring, building, carpentry, goldsmithery, science, astronomy, medicine and the rest of the world's countless and innumerable callings-all these were discovered from within by some person, they were not revealed through stones and dirt. When they say that a raven taught people to bury the dead, even that was due to the reflection of a human being. Someone's own inner urge drove them to learn that. After all, the instincts of the bird are but a part of humanity, but a part does not command the whole.

After the Amir left, someone said: "When the Amir comes, the Master utters mighty words. The words never stop, because he is a master of words. Words flow from him without interruption."

Rumi said: If in winter time the trees do not put forth leaves and fruit, people should not think they are not working. They are continually at work. Winter is the season of gathering; summer is the season of spending. Everyone sees the spending, but they do not see the gathering in. In the same way, a person gives a party and spends all sorts of money on it. Everyone sees this, but no one sees the gathering in and collecting little by little for the sake of that entertainment. No one sees any of that. Yet the ingathering is the root of the matter, for the spending comes out of that income.

Whoever we are in unison with, we communicate with them every moment, even in silence, in absence and presence alike. Even in battle with others, we are together. We may strike against others with our fists; still, we are speaking to them and are absorbed in one action with them. Therefore we are in unison. Don't become distracted by the fists-in those fists are spiritual gifts. You don't believe this? Then open those fists, and see the difference between the sweet joy of unison, and pearls of great price.

Many people speak fine, graceful sayings and lofty wisdom in verse and prose. The inclination of the Amir towards us is not on account of lofty wisdom, graceful sayings and sermonizing. Things of that kind are to be found everywhere, and are by no means in short supply. His loving me and his inclination towards me is not for those

things. He sees something else. He sees a light transcending what he finds from others.

It is related that a certain king summoned Majnun before him.

"What has happened to you. What has befallen you?" the king inquired. "You have disgraced yourself, forsaken your hearth and home, become wasted and utterly destroyed. What is Laila? What beauty is hers? I will show you many beautiful and lovely girls. Name your ransom and I will bestow them upon you."

When they were brought to court, Majnun and the lovely girls were duly introduced. Majnun kept his head cast down, staring in front of him.

"Well now, lift up your head and look!" the king commanded.

"I am afraid," Majnun replied. "My love for Laila is a drawn sword. If I raise my head, that blade will strike it off."

Majnun had become immersed in his love for Laila. Yet, the other girls also had eyes and lips and hair. What then had he found in Laila to come to such a state?

Discourse 12

After the Amir arrived, Rumi said: I've been longing to call on you. But, knowing you were busy with the interests of the people, I spared you the trouble.

The Amir answered: "This duty has been pressing upon me. Now that the emergency has ended, from now on I will wait upon you."

Rumi said: There is no difference. It is all the same thing. You are so gracious that all things are the same to you. Since today it is you who are occupied with good deeds and charities, naturally I am able to call on you.

Just now some of us were discussing this question: If a saint, who carries God's secret jewel [God's grace], strikes someone, breaking their nose and jaw, who is the wronged party? Everyone says the one hurt has been wronged, but in reality the wronged person is the saint who is striking the blow. The one who was punched and had their head broken is the wrong-doer, and the saint is surely the wronged party since they carry God's jewel. The saint is consumed in God, and therefore their actions are God's actions. We wouldn't call God a wrongdoer. The Prophet raided, killed and spilled blood, but the unbelievers were the wrongdoers, and Mohammed

was wronged. For example, a westerner lives in the West. An oriental comes to visit. The westerner is a stranger to the oriental, but who is the real stranger? Is not the oriental a stranger to the entire western world?

Still, this whole world is but a house, no more. Whether we go from this room to that room or from this corner to that corner, are we still not in the same house? But the saints who possess God's jewel have left this house. They have gone beyond. Mohammed said, "Islam began a stranger and will return a stranger as it began." Yet is not this world the real stranger? Therefore, when the Prophet was defeated he was the wronged party, and when he defeated his enemies, he was still the wronged party. For in both cases he was in the right, and the wronged party is the one who is in the right.

Mohammed's heart ached for his prisoners. To comfort the Prophet, God sent down a revelation saying: O Prophet, say to the prisoners in your hands, "If you turn to truth and the righteous way, God will deliver you out of bondage. He will restore everything you have lost, and much more, including treasures in the world to come."

The Amir asked: "When a servant of God performs a service, does the grace and good arise from that action, or is it the gift of God?"

Rumi answered: It is the gift of God and the grace of God. Yet God, out of Its exceeding love gives credit

for both the action and the grace to the servant, declaring, "Both are yours."
The Amir said: "Since God has such love, then everyone who seeks in truth shall find."
Rumi said: But without a guide this does not come to pass. So, when the Israelites were obedient to Moses, ways were opened up to them even through the sea. But when they were disobedient, they remained in the wilderness for many years. The leaders of a given time are charged to secure the welfare of those who are bound to them and are strictly obedient. For instance, if a group of soldiers follow the orders of their commander, he too cares for their welfare and is duty bound to work at securing it. But if they are not obedient, how can he be expected to look after their interests?
The mind is the commander of the human body. So long as the parts of the body surrender to it, all the body's affairs proceed perfectly, but when they disobey, the whole natural order breaks down. Haven't you seen when a man is drunk, his hands and feet and tongue refuse to obey him? Then on the following day, when he is sober again, he cries, "What have I done? Why did I do and say such horrible things?"
In the same way, a village works together in perfect order only when there is a leader that the villagers follow.
Just as the mind is commander in the midst of the body, so all the different beings who make up humankind, together with their many minds, knowl-

edge, speculation and learning, are the body of humanity, and the saint is the mind in the midst of them. Now when these people, who are the body, do not follow that mind, their affairs all fall into confusion and conflict.

They must surrender in such a fashion that no matter what the saint does, they accept it without the argument of their own mind. For often, with their own mind, they cannot understand the saint's actions. Therefore, they must submit to whatever the saint says. Similarly, when a child is apprenticed to a tailor they must obey whatever they are told to do. If they are given a patch to sew, they must sew it. If they are given a hem, they must sew that hem. If they wish to learn their trade, they must surrender their own desires completely and become submissive to the tailor's orders.

"The Night of Power is better Than a thousand months."

God offers us divine guidance and care, which are superior to a hundred thousand strivings and struggles. One tug from God is better than the efforts of all our powers. That is to say, when divine care intervenes it does the work of a hundred thousand struggles and more. Struggling is fine, and useful, but what is it compared to God's guidance and care?

The Amir asked: "Does God's care create struggles?"

Rumi answered: Why shouldn't it? When divine care arrives, struggling begins. Jesus-what a struggle he made! Yet John the Baptist recognized that gift while

still in Mary's womb. Grace comes first. Then if, by accident, awareness enters in, this is the fruit of God's grace-the pure gift of the Lord. If this were not true, then how could Jesus' disciples have received such blessings?

Grace and submission are like a spark of fire that leaps. First we receive the gift. But if you add cotton and nurse that spark until it grows, then that is submission. In the beginning your spark is small and weak. But once you have nursed that weakling fire it spreads across the world and sets the universe aflame. The little spark becomes a great and powerful blaze.

Someone said to the Amir: "Our Master loves you very much."

Rumi replied: Neither my coming nor my speaking is an indication of my love. I say what- ever comes into me. If God wills, It makes these few words profitable so they will grow within your heart, bringing great rewards. If God wills not, if even a hundred thousand words are spoken, they will not lodge in the heart but will pass by and be forgotten. If a spark of fire lands upon a burnt rag and God wills, that one spark will take and engulf the rag. If God wills not, a hundred sparks will fall on that tinder and leave no mark.

These words are God's army. By God's authority they open and seize fortresses. If God commands thousands of horsemen to go and show their faces at such and such a fortress but not to capture it, so it

will be. If It commands a single horseman to seize that fortress, that same single horseman will open the fortress gates and capture it.

God sent a gnat against Nimrod and it destroyed him. "Equal in the eyes of the Gnostic are a penny and a dollar, a lion and a cat." If God bestows Its blessing, one penny does the work of a thousand dollars and more. If God withholds Its blessing from a thousand dollars, they cannot do the work of one penny. So too, if God commis- sions the cat it destroys the lion, as the gnat destroyed Nimrod. In short, when we realize that all things are of God, all things become one and the same in our eyes.

I hope, too, that you will hear these words within your hearts, for that would be profitable. But if a thousand thieves come from outside, they cannot open the door without some fellow-thief inside who can unlock that door. Speak a thousand words from the outside, still, so long as there is none to answer from within, the door never opens. So too with a tree- as long as there is no moist thirst in its roots, even if you poured a thousand torrents of water over it, it would accomplish nothing. First there must be a thirst in its roots for the water to nourish it. Although the whole world is ablaze with the sun's light, unless there is that spark of light within the eye, no one can behold that light. The root of the matter is the receptiveness within Soul.

Soul is one thing and spirit is another. Don't you see during sleep how Soul travels abroad? Spirit remains

in the body, keeping it alive, but Soul wanders and is transformed. When Mohammed said, "He who knows his own self knows his Lord," he was speaking of knowing Soul.

If we say that he was speaking of this soul or that soul, that is something very different. On the other hand, if we explain it as meaning Soul, Itself, the listener may still think we mean one soul, since they do not yet know Soul, Itself. Mere words cannot convey this spiritual understanding. Words only reveal what the heart has an ear to hear.

Beyond this world is another world for us. This world and its delights cater to the animal within us. These pleasures all fill our animal nature, while our real self slowly dies. They say, "The human being is a rational animal," yet we consist of two things. Lusts and desires feed our animali-ty in this material world. But as for our true essence, its food is knowledge, wisdom, and the sight of God. The animality within us flees away from God, while our spiritual self flees away from this world.

"One of you is an unbeliever,
And one of you a believer."
Two people are warring within you.
Who shall succeed?
The one that Fortune makes her friend.

This world is a world of winter. Isn't the name "solid" given to inanimate things? These stones and mountains, and the garments worn by this world, are all solidified. The inner essence of this world can be

known by its effects: it is wind and bitter cold. It is like the winter season when all things are frozen. What manner of winter is it? A winter of the mind. When that divine zephyr comes along, these mountains will begin to melt, and the solidity of this world will dissolve-just like when the warmth of summer comes along, all the snow and ice turn to water. On the resurrection day, when that zephyr blows, all things will melt away.

God makes these words an army to surround you and protect you against the enemy, and to be the means of overwhelming the enemy. For there are enemies-enemies within and enemies without. Yet they are really nothing-what could they be?

Don't you see how a thousand godless people submit themselves to one leader who becomes their ruler, and that ruler is captive to his own thoughts? From this it is easy to see the effect of thoughts, since through one feeble and muddled thought thousands of people and worlds are taken prisoner. Consider then, those whose thoughts are without limitations-what grandeur and splendor they possess, how easily they overwhelm the enemy, and what worlds they subdue!

When I see the limitless wisdom that exists, while armies unending stretch through waste upon waste, all prisoners of one person, and that person the prisoner of a contemptible little thought-where do they all stand compared to thoughts of powerful depths, infinite light, holy, and sublime?

Therefore thoughts have real effects. In this physical world all living things merely follow and act as instruments of thought. Without thought they are inanimate and solid. In the same way, those who understand only the outer form are also solid. They cannot penetrate the meaning. They are children, spiritually, and immature even if they are Sufi sheikhs, a hundred years old.

"We have returned from the lesser holy war To fight the Greater Holy War."

We all see the battle with outward things and people, and we draw up our forces against these formal adversaries. We must also draw up our forces against the armies of thoughts, so that desirable thoughts will defeat destructive thoughts and drive them out of the kingdom of our bodies. This then is indeed the greater struggle and the greater war.

Thoughts have their effect. They work beyond the influence of the body like the Laws of Nature without any instrument keep the heavens turning. Therefore philosophers say that thoughts don't require a body. After all, the body is but an accident. Why should anyone dwell on an accident?

Reality is like a musk-pod, and this material world and its delights are merely the scent of that musk. This scent is but transient, a mere accident. The individual who seeks the musk itself, not content with only the scent, that person is wise. But whoever is satisfied to possess the scent is a fool. They have chased after a thing their hand cannot grasp, for the

scent is merely an attribute of the musk. So long as the musk is present in this world, its scent comes to the nostrils. However, when it leaves this world and crosses that invisible veil, all those who lived by its scent die. The scent follows the musk, and goes wherever the musk goes.

Fortunate is the person who finds the musk from following its scent and then becomes one with the musk. They never die, but become an eternal part of the musk's essence, imbued with the qualities of the musk. They will carry its scent to the world, and the world is revived by them. Only the name of what that person used to be survives, as with a horse or any other animal that has turned to salt in the desert, only the name of horse remains to it. In effect and in truth it has now become a part of that great ocean of salt. What good or harm can a name do? It will not bring it out of its saltiness. And if you give some other name to this salt-mine, it will not change its taste.

So it behooves us to turn away from the pleasures and delights of this world, that are the rays and reflections of God. We must not become content with this much, even though this much exists through God's grace and the radiance of God's beauty. Still, it is not eternal. From God's viewpoint it is eternal, but from our viewpoint it is not. It is like the rays of the sun that shine into our house, for though they are rays of the sun and are light, yet they belong to the sun. When the sun sinks, the light disappears too.

Therefore it behooves us to become the Sun, so the fear of separation cannot cloud our life.

There is giving, and there is knowingness. Some have generosity and compassion but no true knowledge. Some have knowledge but no self-sacrifice. When both are present, that person is blessed and prosperous. Such a being is truly incomparable.

A stranger is going along a road, but does not know where the road begins or ends, or whether they have wandered the wrong way. They go on blindly, hoping that perhaps a cock will crow, or some other sign of habitation will appear. How can such a stranger be compared with those who know the road and travel at ease, not needing sign or waymark? They have their assigned task clearly before them. Therefore, knowing exceeds all else.

Discourse 13

Mohammed said, "The night is long, do not shorten it with your sleep. The day is bright, do not darken it with your sins."

The night is long for you to voice your inmost secrets and ask for your needs without the distraction of others, without the disturbance of friends and foes. You are granted peace and privacy as God draws down the veil before the eyes of others, so your acts may be honest, truthful and done wholly for God.

At night the hypocrite is exposed. The world may be hidden by the dark and shown clearly by the light of day, but at night the hypocrite stands revealed from the sincere.

"Since nobody is watching," the hypocrite says, "for whose sake should I pretend?"

Somebody is watching, but the hypocrite's eyes are closed and cannot see that One.

In times of distress everyone calls for help; in times of toothache, and earache, in doubt, fear and insecurity. In secret everyone calls out hoping that One will hear and grant their requests. Privately, secretly, people perform good deeds to ward off weakness and re-store their strength, trusting that Life will accept their gifts and efforts. When they are restored to health

and peace of mind, then suddenly their faith leaves, and the phantom of anxiety soon returns.

"O God," they cry again, "we were in such a terrible state when, with all sincerity, we called upon you from our prison corner. For a hundred prayers you granted our requests. Now, freed of the prison, we are still as much in need. Bring us out of this world of darkness into that world of the prophets, the world of light. Why can freedom not come without prisons and pain? A thousand desires fill us, both good and deceitful, and the conflict of these phantoms brings a thousand tortures that leave us weary. Where is that sure faith that burns up all phantoms?"

God answers, "The seeker of pleasure in you is your enemy and My enemy.

'Do not take your enemy and
My enemy for a friend.'

When your pleasure-seeking self is imprisoned, filled with trouble and pain, then your freedom arrives and gathers strength. A thousand times you have proved that freedom comes to you out of toothache, headache and fear. Why then are you chained to bodily comfort? Why are you always occupied with tending the flesh? Do not forget the end of that thread: unravel those bodily passions till you have attained your eternal passion, and find freedom from the prison of darkness."

Discourse 14

Sheikh Ibrahim said: "Whenever Saif-al-Din Farrukh ordered someone to be given a beating, he would immediately occupy himself until the beating was over, so that no one could intercede."

Rumi said: Whatever you see in this world corresponds exactly with what is in the world beyond. All these realities are samples of the other Reality. Whatever exists in this world has come from there.

The bald man of Baalbek carried on his head trays and samples of various herbs-a pinch of pepper, a pinch of mastic, a pinch from every heap. The heaps were infinite, but there was no room on his tray for more. People are like the bald man of Baalbek, they are loaded with pinches and pieces out of the treasuries of God, some known and some hidden-a piece of hearing, a piece of speech, a piece of reason, a piece of generosity, a piece of knowledge. For this reason our work is always a reflection of God.

There are beings who are hawkers of God. Night and day they fill trays. By day you spend away your portion to make your living, by night these beings replenish your tray.

For instance, in the other world there are sights and visions of many kinds. A sample of those has been

sent to you to see in this world. Sight is not limited to this world only, but the human body cannot bear more than this.

Thousands of people, generation after generation, have come and filled themselves from that Sea, returning again and again. That source is infinite. The longer we stay upon that Infinite Sea, the colder our heart grows for this world of samples.

This world is coined in that Mint and must return to that Mint again. All our parts have issued from that Mint, are samples of that Mint, and must return again-small and great, for all living creatures. Yet upon the tray of this world life becomes visible; without the tray it is not visible.

That infinite world is a subtle world and does not reveal itself openly-yet look how wonderfully it makes its appearance here! Don't you see how the spring breeze becomes visible in the trees and grasses, the rose-beds and sweet herbs? Through the swaying of fields and flowers you witness the beauty of spring. But when you look upon the breeze itself, you see nothing. This isn't because the beauty of those rose-beds are outside the reality of the breeze, for the spring breeze contains images of swaying rose-beds and sweet herbs, but those images are subtle and invisible. Only through some medium are they revealed out of their subtlety.

Likewise in the human being these qualities are hidden and only become manifest through an inward or outward medium; one person through speech, an-

other through work, another during times of war or peace. You cannot see these attributes within yourself-look and you will find nothing there-so you believe yourself empty of these infinite attributes. These attributes do not come forth and change you into something else from what you were. Rather, these qualities are hidden in you, like the water in the sea. Water cannot leave the sea except through the sun's heat in the form of a cloud; it cannot become visible except in a wave. Your wave is a commotion visible within you, but so long as the sea is still, you see nothing. Your body is on the shore of the sea, and Soul is a part of the ocean itself. Do you not see how many fishes, snakes, birds, and creatures of all kinds come forth and show themselves, and then return to the sea? Your attributes such as patience, friendship, loyalty and the rest, come forth from this sea.

These qualities are subtle lovers of God. You can only glimpse them through the medium of the tongue. But because of their subtlety, without speech they are naked and they retreat back out of sight into the arms of God.

Discourse 15

Within people there is a longing and a desire such that, even if a hundred thousand worlds were theirs to own, still they would find no rest or comfort. They try every trade and craft, studying astronomy, medicine and every other subject, but they reach no completion, for they have not found their true desire. Poets call the Beloved "heart's ease," because there the heart finds ease. How can we find peace and rest in anything but the Beloved?

All these pleasures and pursuits are like a ladder. The rungs of a ladder are not a place to make one's home; they are for passing by. Fortunate are those who learn this. The long road becomes short for them, and they do not waste their lives upon the steps.

Someone asked: "The Mongols have seized property by force, and from time to time they give this property back to us. This is a strange situation. Is it lawful to accept this property? What is your ruling?"

Rumi answered: Whatever the Mongols seize and give up returns into the grasp and treasury of God. For example, when you fill a jug or a barrel from the river and carry it away, that becomes your property. So long as it is in the jug or barrel, nobody has the right to interfere. Whoever takes the jug without

permission is guilty of theft. But once they pour the water back into the river, it passes out of ownership and is lawful for anyone to take once again. So our property is unlawful to them, while their property is lawful to us since by their giving it up they have returned it to the treasury of God.

Someone said: "When the Mongols first came to these parts they were naked and bare. They rode on bullocks and their weapons were made of wood. Now they are sleek and well-fed, they have splendid Arab horses and carry fine arms."

Rumi said: When they were desperate and weak and had no strength, God helped them and answered their prayer. Now, when they are so powerful and mighty, God is destroying them with the comforts of the feeblest, so they will realize it was through God's bounty and support that they captured the world, and not by their own force and power.

They used to live in a wilderness, far from civilization, without means, poor, naked and needy. By chance, some of them came to trade in the territory of the Khvarizmshah. They began to buy and sell, purchasing muslin to clothe their bodies.

The Khvarizmshah stopped them, ordering them to be put to death, and forcing payment from the rest of them. The Mongols went humbly before their king, saying, "They have killed us." Their king asked for ten days, and then entered a deep cave where he fasted and humbled himself. On the tenth day a proclamation came from God, "I have accepted your

supplication. Come forth! Wherever you go, you shall be victorious." So it was. When they came forth, by God's command they won the victory and captured the world.

Someone said: "The Mongols also believe in the resurrection and say that there will be a judgement."

Rumi said: They lie, desiring to be accepted by Muslims. If they really believe in the resurrection, where is the evidence to prove it? The sins, wrongs and evils they commit are like snow and ice piled together as high as a mountain. When thoughts of the resurrection come to us, like the sun it melts those snows of sinfulness as the sun in the heaven melts anything hard. How can the summer sun come and leave the snow and ice of winter intact? Seeing their snow and ice piled heap upon heap is proof that the sun has not shone upon them.

Although God has promised that all good and evil will be rewarded justly on the last day, yet a sample of this comes to pass every moment and in every instant. If happiness enters into someone's heart, that is his or her reward for making another happy. If they become sorrowful, it is because they have brought sorrow to another. These are gifts from the other world and tokens of that day of rewards, so that by these little things we may come to understand those great matters, just as a handful of corn is offered as a token of the whole heap.

The Prophet, for all his majesty and greatness, one night felt pain in his hand. It was revealed to him that

this pain was the effect of a pain in the hands of 'Abbas. For he had taken 'Abbas captive and had bound his hands together with all the prisoners. Although the tying of his hands was done at God's order, still the Prophet had to suffer. These troubles and depressions that come to you are the effect of some injury and wrong you have committed. Even if you cannot remember in detail what you have done, still from the results you can know the deed. You may not remember whether it came from your own negligence or ignorance, or because others swayed you into wrongful action. But look at the results: how much did you fall from grace, or how much has your heart expanded? Certainly a fall from grace is the response of disobedience to God, and expansion of the heart is the reward of obedience. Why, the Prophet himself was rebuked because he turned a ring on his finger. He was told, "We did not create you for idleness and play." From this decide for yourself whether your day is passed in obedience or disobedience.Moses was occupied with the affairs of his people. Although he was at God's command and completely served God, yet one side of him was occupied with humanity for the general good. Khadir was occupied with God completely; he hid himself from the sight of others. Mohammed was occupied at first wholly with God, then he was told, "Call the people. Counsel them and reform them." Mohammed wept and lamented, saying, "Oh, my Lord, what sin have I committed? Why do you drive me

from Your presence? I have no desire for this world." God said to him, "Mohammed, do not despair, I will not abandon you. Even in the midst of others you shall be with Me. When you are occupied with people, not one hair of the head of this hour with Me, not one, will be taken from you. In whatever work you are engaged, you will be in very union with Me."Someone asked: "The eternal decrees that God has predestined, do they ever change?"Rumi answered: How could God say, "Do evil to find good?" If someone sows wheat, can they gather barley? Or if they sow barley, will they gather wheat? That is impossible. All the saints and prophets have said that good is the reward of good, evil the reward of evil."And whoever does an atoms weight of goodshall see it,And whoever does an atoms weight of evilshall see it."Someone interjected: "But we see wicked people turn virtuous, and virtuous people turn wicked."Rumi answered: Well, those wicked men and women did some good, or thought good things, which brought them virtue. And those virtuous people did some evil act, or contemplated evil things, turning them wicked.Someone asked: "What is the meaning of the saying, 'Blessings upon the Prophet'?"Rumi answered: It means that our acts of adoration, service and worship do not belong to us, they come from God. Just like the season of spring brings the planting of seeds, and jaunts into the wilderness. They are the gift and bounty of spring.The people of this world see secondary causes and think

they are the origin of everything. God's saints see the actualities as they are created and come into being. Secondary causes are only a veil to occupy the common peo-ple.God promised Zachariah, "I will give you a son." Zachariah cried, "I am an old man, and my wife is old. My instrument of lust has become feeble, and my wife can no longer conceive. Lord, how can a son be born?"The answer came, "Take heed Zachariah! You have lost the clue. I have shown you a hundred thousand times that actualities have no causes. This very moment, I could produce out of you a hundred thousand sons without a wife and without pregnancy. Indeed, if I make the sign, a whole people will come forth, completely formed and grown. Did I not bring you into being in the world of spirits without a mother or father? Why do you forget these things?" The rank and substance of the prophets and saints and the many states of humanity can be set forth in a parable: Slaves are brought out of the heathen lands into the realm of Muslimdom, where they are sold. Some are brought at the age of five years, some are ten, and some are fifteen years old. Those who were brought as children, having been nurtured for many years amongst Muslims, completely forget their homeland. No trace of it remains in their memory. Those brought a little older remember a little. Those much older remember much more.In the world beyond, all are in the Presence of God. The food and sustenance there is the speech of God, without letters and without sounds.

Those who are brought into this world as children, when they hear that Speech, remember nothing of their for- mer state and see themselves as strangers to that Speech. They are veiled from God, being wholly sunk in forgetfulness. Some remember a little bit, and the longing and yearning for the other side is quick- ened in them. They seek out Truth. They are the be- lievers. Some, when they hear that Speech, the Pres- ence of God becomes manifest before their eyes, even as it was long ago. The veils are entirely removed, and they are joined in that union. These are the prophets and the saints.Now I say this to you ear- nestly, when the brides of heavenly truth show their faces within you and their secrets are revealed, be- ware, do not tell this to strangers. Do not describe what you have witnessed to others, and do not tell everyone these words of mine."Do not impart wis- dom to those not worthy,lest you do wisdom wrong.And, do not withhold from the worthy,lest you do them wrong."If a fair and adorable lover surrenders to you privately in your house, saying, "Show me to no one, for I belong to you," it would never be proper for you to parade her in the bazaars and to call out, "Come and see this beauty!" That would never be agreeable to such an adorable one. She would be enraged against you.God has made these words unlawful to some. Even so, dwellers in Hell cry out to the dwellers in Paradise, saying, "Where is your generosity and your humanity? Out of those gifts and bounties that God has given to you,

out of charity and common kindness if you sprinkle just a little upon us, could that be so difficult? We are burning and melting in this fire. Out of those fruits, or out of those clear waters of Paradise, if you sprinkle a drop or two upon our souls, what would that be?"The dwellers in Paradise answer, "God has forbidden that to you. The seed of this bliss came from our earlier deeds. Since you did not sow and cultivate with faith, sincerity and good works, what should you gather here? Even if out of generosity we should share with you, since it is not your reward it would burn your throats and stick in your gullets."A crowd of hypocrites and strangers came into the presence of Mohammed. They began to talk about mysteries and praised the Prophet. Mohammed turned to his companions and said, "Cover up your vessels." He meant, "Conceal wisdom from strangers, and in their presence stop up your mouths and tongues, for they are mice and not worthy of this wisdom and grace."The

Amir who has just left our company-though he did not understand in detail what we were saying, yet he realizes in general that we were calling him to God. I take the wagging of his head, his smile of affection and his flush of passion as a sign of his understanding. If people from the country come into the city and hear the call to prayer, though they do not know in detail the meaning of the call, still they understand its purpose.16Rumi said: Whoever is loved is beautiful, but this doesn't mean that whoever is beautiful is

loved."There are girls more beautiful than Laila," they used to tell Majnun. "Let us bring some to you.""I do not love Laila for her form," Majnun would reply. "Laila is like a cup in my hand. I drink wine from that cup. I am in love with that wine. You only have eyes for the goblet and do not know the wine. A golden goblet studded with precious stones, but containing only vinegar, what use is that to me? An old broken gourd with wine is better in my eyes than a hundred goblets of gold."A person must be moved with passion and yearning for them to tell the wine from the cup. This is the same as someone who is hungry, who hasn't eaten for ten days, and another who has eaten five times a day. Both see a loaf of bread. The full one sees only more food, but the hungry person sees life, itself. To the hungry, this bread is a goblet, and the life it brings is wine. Such wine cannot be known except through hunger and yearning. Acquire this appetite so you will not only see the appearances of form, but will find the Beloved everywhere.

The forms of this world are cups. Science, art and knowledge are inscriptions upon the cup. When the cup is broken, those inscriptions disappear. Therefore, those who drink the wine see "the eternal reality, the deeds of holiness..."

Anyone asking a question must first come to the awareness that their knowledge is incomplete, and secondly that there is wisdom they know nothing

about. Hence, the saying, "Asking is half of knowing."

But there must always be one in this world who knows. Everyone looks to someone, because ultimately we are looking for God. But there must always be one who can distinguish those who are hitting the mark from those who have been struck by the arrow of someone else's bow.

If you hear words coming through a wall, you know that wall isn't speaking and that voice belongs to someone else. The saints are like this. They have died before death, and have become like doors and walls. Not even a hair's tip of separate existence remains in them. In the hands of Reality, they are shields-but the shield doesn't move under its own power. Thus the saints say, "I am the Truth," meaning, "I am nothing at all, I move by the Hand of God." Look upon such shields as God. Do not take up violence against God. Striking blows against such shields are just like declaring war against God, Itself.

Every saint is God's proof. The rank and station of men and women is determined by how they treat the saint. If they are hostile to the saint, they are acting hostile against God. If they befriend the saint, they have made friendship with God.

"Whoever has seen them has seen Me.
Whoever finds them has found Me."

God's saints are familiar with the secrets of His refuge. They have become intimate with the Divine Mysteries that "none but the purified shall touch." If

they turn their backs on the tomb of a great saint, it is not out of disobedience or neglect. They have turned their faces toward that saint's essence, for these words spoken here are their essence. There is no harm in turning away from the body to face the soul. It is a custom of mine that I want no heart to become distressed through me. During our meetings, sometimes a great multitude thrust themselves upon me and some of my friends try to fend them off. That disturbs me. I have said a hundred times, "Say nothing on my account. I am content with that." I care to such a degree that when such friends come to me, I dread the thought of boring them, so I speak poetry for their enjoyment. Otherwise, what do I care about poetry? By God, I care nothing for poetry. There is nothing worse in my eyes. To me, it is like the cook who plunges his hand into tripe, cleaning it out for the sake of a guest's appetite.

A merchant searches to see what products are needed in their city, and what the people want to buy. Then they buy and sell those goods and services, even if they are the lowest of things in their eyes. I have studied many sciences and taken pains to offer fine, rare and precious things to the scholars and researchers, the clever ones and the deep thinkers who come to me. God has willed this. He gathered to me all those sciences, and assembled here all those pains, so I would become occupied with this work. What can I do? In my own country, and amongst my own people, there is nothing more

shameful than poetry. If I had remained there, I would have lived in harmony with their temperament. I would have practiced what they love, such as giving lectures, composing books and preaching.

The Amir said: "The root of the matter is action."

Rumi said: Where are such people of action, so that I can teach them action? But now look how you cock your ears, seeking after words instead of action. If I were to stop speaking now, you would become upset. Become a seeker of action, so that I can show you action!

I am looking all over the world for students of action so that I can teach action. I am looking all over the world for anyone who knows action, but I find no student of action-only of words, and so I occupy myself with words. What do you know of action? Action is only known through action. There is not one traveler upon this road-it is empty-so how will anyone see if we are on the true path of action?

After all, prayer and fasting are not action; these are forms of action. Action is an inward reality. From the time of Adam to the time of Mohammed, prayer and fasting have changed their form, but action is still the same.

Action is not what people think it is. People believe action is this outward show. But if a hypocrite performs only the form of action, such as prayer or fasting, it gains them nothing, since the sincere desire for true action was not present.

The secret principle of all things is speech and words. You do not yet know the true knowledge of speech and words, therefore you consider them unimportant. However, speech is fruit from the tree of action, for words are born of action. God created the world by a word.

You may have faith in your heart, but unless you share it through words, it is worth nothing.

When you say, "In this present age words are of no account," you say this with words, do you not? If words are of no account, then why do we hear you say this with words?

Someone asked: "When we do a good deed, if we have hopes and expectations of a good reward from God, does that harm us?"

Rumi answered: By God, we must always have hope. Faith, itself, consists of fear and hope. Someone once asked me, "Hope itself is good, but what is this fear?" I said, "Show me a fear without hope, or a hope without fear. The two are inseparable." For example, a farmer plants wheat. Naturally he hopes that wheat will grow. At the same time he is afraid some blight or drought may destroy it. So, there is no hope without fear, or fear without hope.

Now, when we hope expectantly for a reward, we will surely work with greater effort. Expectation becomes our wings, and the stronger our wings the farther the flight. If, on the other hand we lose hope, we become lazy and of no value to anyone. A sick person will take bitter medicine and give up ten

sweet pleasures, but if they have no hope for health, why would they endure this?

We are a mixture of animal and speech. If we do not speak outwardly, we still speak inwardly- we are constantly speaking. We are like a river in which clay is mixed; the pure water is our speech, while the clay is our animality. But the clay in us is an accident. Do you not see how those pieces of clay have crumbled and rotted away, while mankind's speech, poetry and sciences, both bad and good have remained?

The 'man or woman of heart' is a universe. When you have seen them, you have seen all. "All game is in the belly of the wild ass." All creatures in this world are contained in the man and woman of heart.

Good and evil, the dervishes may be,
Whoever is not so, no dervishes are they.

Once you have seen one who is the whole, surely you have seen the whole world. Whoever you see after is a mere repetition. That person's speech is contained in the words of the whole. Once you have heard their words, every word you hear thereafter is an echo. Whoever beholds such a one, in any place, Has seen all men and women, all time and space.

As the poet says: You are the true transcription
Of the Archetype Divine.
A glass through which the Sun's
Own loveliness does shine.
Within, or without, Wherever it may lie,
Accept every desire, And declare, "'Tis I!"

Discourse 17

The Amir of Rum said: "The unbelievers used to worship and bow down to idols. Now we are doing the selfsame thing. We go and bow down and wait upon the Mongols, and yet we consider ourselves Muslims. We have many other idols in our heart too, such as greed, passion, temper, envy, and we are obedient to all of them. So we act in the very same way as the unbelievers, both outwardly and inwardly, and we consider ourselves Muslims!"

Rumi answered: But here is something different; it enters your thoughts that this conduct is evil and utterly detestable. The eye of your heart has seen something incomparably greater that shows up this behavior as vile and hideous. Brackish water shows its brackishness to one who has tasted sweet water, and things are made clear by their opposites.

So God has implanted in Soul the light of faith to see these things as hideous. Confronted by beauty, this appears ugly. Yet others are not affected this way, they are perfectly happy in their existing state, saying, "This is absolutely fine."

God will grant you your heart's desire-where your ambition is, that will be yours. "The bird flies with its wings, the believers fly with their aspiration."

There are three kinds of creatures. First there are angels, who are pure spiritual conscience. Worship, service and the remembrance of God are their nature and their food. They eat and live upon that essence. Like fish in the water, their mattress and pillow are the water. Angels are pure and free of lust, so what favor do they gain by not yielding to such desires? Since they are free of these things, they have no struggle against them. If they obey God's will it is not counted as obedience, for this is their nature, and they cannot be otherwise.

Second are the beasts who are pure sensuality, having no spiritual conscience to restrain them. They too are under no burden of obligation.

Lastly, there remains the poor human being, who is a compound of spiritual conscience and sensuality. We are half angel, half beast. Half snake, half fish. The fish draws us toward water, the snake toward the earth. We are forever in battle. If our spiritual conscience overcomes our sensuality, we are higher than the angels. If our sensuality overcomes our spiritual conscience, we are lower than the beasts.

"The angel is saved through knowledge,
The animal-through ignorance.
Between the two struggle the people of this world."

Now, some have followed their spiritual conscience so faithfully that they have become entirely angels and pure Light. They are the prophets and the saints. They are freed of fear and hope. In some, lust has overcome their spiritual conscience so entirely that

they have taken on the status of animals. Some are still struggling. These last are the people who feel within themselves an agony and anguish, a sorrow and a longing. They are not satisfied with their lives. These are the believers. The saints are waiting to bring them to their own station, to make them like themselves, just as the satans, too, are waiting to draw them to the lowest of the low.

"When God's help comes through victory,
And you see people
Submitting to His Will in throngs,
Then fill yourself with the presence of the Lord,
And seek His forgiveness;
For God turns to men and women again."

Now, commentators offer an outward interpretation to the above Sura, from the Koran, as follows: Mohammed had the dream, "I will make all the world Muslims and bring them to the path of God." When he saw his death approaching he cried, "Ah, didn't I come into this life to call the people to God?" God answered, "Do not grieve. In that very hour when you pass away, provinces and cities which you would conquer by armies and by the sword I will convert to obedience and to the faith, every one of them without armies. The sign of this will come at the end when you are dying, you will see people entering in throngs and becoming Muslims. When this sign comes, know that the time for your departure has arrived. Then give praise, and seek forgiveness."

However, there is an inward meaning to this Sura as well: People think they can drive away evil by great effort and striving. After struggling and exhausting all their powers and means, they fall into despair. Then God says to them: "You thought you could achieve this goal through your own power, action and work. This is the law I have laid down: Whatever you possess, spend it in Our name. Then Our grace will supervene.

"You must journey upon this infinite road with the feeble hands and feet that you possess. We know well that with feet so feeble you can never accomplish this journey. Indeed, in a hundred thousand years you will not be able to accomplish a single stage of this journey. But even as you collapse and fall, with no strength left to struggle farther, then Our loving breath will carry you on. Even a child, so long as it is a suckling, is carried in the arms, but when it is grown it is set free to walk. Now in this hour when your powers have left you, when your own means fail, behold Our graces, Our gifts and Our love. You will not witness even an atom of such blessings after a hundred thousand strivings."

I do not love or bow down to the Amir on account of worldly considerations, for his rank, learning or achievements. Others love him for those reasons, not seeing the Amir's face, but only his back. The Amir is like a mirror with precious pearls on its back, with gold inlaid. Those who love gold and pearls look at the back of the mirror, but those who love life always

look upon the mirror, and love the mirror for itself. They do not grow weary of the fair beauty they see. But those with a hideous face full of blemishes see in the mirror only ugliness. They quickly turn the mirror and look for those precious stones. Yet what harm is done to the face of the mirror if its back is studded with a thousand kinds of engravings and precious stones?

"Things are made clear by their opposite." It is impossible to know anything without its opposite, yet God has no opposite. "I was a hidden treasure," God says, "and I wanted to be known." So It created this world of darkness for Its Light to become visible. So, too, It manifested the prophets and the saints, saying, "Go forth with My Attributes into My creation." They are the theater for the Light of God, where friend may be disclosed from foe, and brother from stranger. The struggles of the saints reveals God's opposite, even though It has none. Through persecution and opposition, the saints become known and admired.

"With their mouths, the unbelievers try to extinguish the Light of God. But God will perfect His Light through their adversity."

God chastises some people through wealth, gold and rulership, for Soul flees from such possessions. Shams saw a prince riding in Arabia, on his brow the illumination of the prophets and saints. Shams said, "Glory be to God who chastises His servants by means of affluence!"

Discourse 18

Someone said: "Ibn Muqri recites the Koran correctly."
Rumi said: Yes, he recites the form of the Koran correctly, but he has no knowledge of its meaning. This is proven by the fact that when he is questioned for its meaning, he cannot answer. He recites blindly. He is like a man who holds an old, tattered sable in his hand; he is offered a newer, finer sable, but he refuses it. So we can see that he doesn't know what sable really is. Someone told him that this is sable, and he blindly accepted it.
It is like children playing with walnuts. Offer them the nut itself, or the oil of the walnut, and they will refuse it, saying, "The walnut is what we spin on the table. This doesn't spin." God's treasuries are many, and God's sciences are many. If he recites this Koran with knowledge, why does he reject the other eternal Koran?
I once explained to a Koran-teacher: The Koran says, "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, the sea would be spent before the Words of my Lord are spent." Now, with fifty drams of ink one can copy the whole of this Koran. Therefore, the Koran is only

a symbol of God's knowledge and all the knowledge belonging to God.

An apothecary puts a pinch of medicine in a piece of paper. You wouldn't say, "The whole of the apothecary's shop is in this paper." That would be foolishness. After all, in the time of Moses and Jesus and the other prophets, the Koran existed. God's speech existed, but it was not in Arabic. I explained this to the Koran-teacher in this way, but I could see that it made no impression so I let him go.

It is related that during the time of the Prophet anyone who knew one Sura by heart, or half a Sura, was called a great person and pointed out, "They have a Sura by heart," since in that day they devoured the Koran. To devour a loaf of bread, or two loafs, is certainly a great accomplishment. But people who put bread in their mouths without chewing it and spit it out again can devour thousands of tons in that way. Still this is a good thing. God has sealed the eyes of some people so they can cultivate this present world. If no one were blind to the other world, this world would be empty. It is this blindness that gives rise to culture and progress. Consider children, how they grow up recklessly and become tall, but when their judgement reaches maturity they stop growing. So the cause and reason for civilization is blindness, and the cause of devastation is sight.

What I am saying is motivated by one of two things: Either I speak out of envy, or I speak with compassion. God forbid that it should be envy! It is stupid to

envy even those who are worthy of envy, then how can we envy one who is not worthy? No, I speak out of great compassion and mercy, for I wish to draw you into the true meaning.

A story is told of a man on the way to the pilgrimage who collapsed in the desert, overcome by thirst. Suddenly he saw in the distance a small and tattered tent. He struggled there, and seeing a young girl, he cried aloud, "I am a guest! I have attained my goal!" Saying this, he sat down and asked for water. She brought him water that was hotter than fire and more brackish than salt, and from lip to throat it burned every part. The man, out of extreme compassion, addressed the woman.

"I am indebted to you for what relief you have given me," he said. "Compassion has welled up within me. Listen to what I say to you. Behold, Baghdad is nearby, and Kufa and Wasit and the rest. There you will find plenty of sweet, cool water, foods of various kinds, baths, luxuries, rich delights." And he described the pleasures of those cities.

A moment later the Bedouin came on the scene who was the woman's husband. He had caught a few brace of desert rats, which he told the woman to cook. They offered some to the guest, who being in such desperate straits ate them. After that, in the middle of the night, the guest slept outside the tent. The woman spoke to her husband.

"Did you hear all the stories our guest had to tell?" And she repeated to her husband the guest's entire account.

"Don't listen to these things," the Bedouin answered. "There are many envious people in the world. When they see others living a life of ease and abundance, they envy them and want to send them wandering away to deprive them of their fortune."

So it is with many people. When anyone out of pure compassion offers them a piece of advice, they see it as envy. But if there are roots in a person, in the end they will turn their face to the truth. If, since the day of the Primordial Covenant a drop has been sprinkled upon them, in the end that drop will deliver them out of all confusion and misery. Come then! How long will you be remote from us and estranged? How long locked up in confusion and sadness? And what should we say to people who have never heard stories like this before, even from their own teacher?

Since greatness never graced their forebears,
They cannot bear to hear the great ones praised.

Although facing the truth is not attractive at first, the longer one follows it the sweeter it becomes. This is the opposite of outward forms that charm us at first, but the longer you sit with them thinking they are all there is, the colder you become. What is the form of the Koran compared with its meaning? Examine a man or woman: what is their form compared with their meaning? If the sense of that person departs, we

wouldn't let them loose in our house for one moment.

Our Master, Shams, once told this story: A great caravan was on its way to a distant city. Along the way they found a certain place with no sign of habitation or water. Suddenly they came upon a well with no bucket. So they took a kettle and some rope and lowered this kettle into the well. They drew up the rope, but the kettle broke away. They sent down another, but it broke away too. After that they tied people from the caravan with a rope and lowered them down into the well, but they disappeared as well.

Now there was a man of great heart present. He said, "I will go down." They lowered him down. He was nearly to the bottom of the well when a terrible black creature suddenly appeared.

"I will never escape," the man thought. "But at least let me keep my wits about me and not lose my senses, so that I can see what is going to happen."

"Don't make a long story of it," the black creature said. "You're my prisoner. You won't escape unless you give me the right answer. Nothing else will save you."

"Ask on," said the man.

"Where is the best place?" the creature asked.

"I am a prisoner and helpless," the man reflected. "If I say Baghdad or some other place, I might insult his own hometown." Then he spoke aloud, "The best place to live is wherever we feel at home. If that is in

the bowels of the earth, then that's the best place. If it's in a mouse hole, then that's the best place."
"Well said, well said!" cried the creature. "You've escaped. You're one in a million. Now I've let you go, and set free the others on account of your blessing. From this time forward I'll shed no more blood. I bestow this gift on all the people of the world out of love for you."
Then he gave the people of the caravan water to satisfy their needs.
The purpose of this story is contained in its inner meaning. We can tell the same meaning in another form, but the lovers of traditional forms will accept this version. It is difficult to speak with them. If we speak these very same words in another parable they will not listen.

Discourse 19

Rumi said: Someone said to Taj al-Din Quba'i, "These doctors of divinity live amongst us and deprive the people of their religious beliefs." Taj al-Din Quba'i answered, "They do not live amongst us and take away our beliefs. God forbid they could ever be one of us. If you put a golden collar on a dog, do you call it a hunting dog because of that collar? The quality of being a hunting dog is something specific in the animal, whether it wears a collar of gold or wool."

No one becomes a scholar by virtue of robe and turban. Scholarship is a virtue in its very essence, and whether that virtue is clothed in tunic or overcoat, it makes no difference.

Thus, in Mohammed's time, the hypocrites used to put on prayer-robes to lure Muslims away from the Faith. How could they lead astray Muslims until they dressed up as Muslims, themselves? If a Christian or a Jew criticized Islam, who would listen to them?

"Woe to those that pray
Yet do not listen to their own prayers,
Or to those who make big displays
But for others have no care."

But these are merely words. You have caught that Light but still have not found humanity. Seek humanity: that is your true purpose. The rest is mere long-windedness. When words are elaborately decorated, their purpose is forgotten.

A certain greengrocer was in love with a woman, and he sent messages by the lady's maid.

"I am like this, I am like that. I am in love, I am on fire. I find no peace. I am cruelly treated. I was like this yesterday. Last night such and such happened to me." And he recited long, long stories.

The maid came into the lady's presence and addressed her as follows:

"The greengrocer sends you greetings and says, 'Come, so that I may do this and that to you.'"

"So coldly?" the lady asked.

"He spoke at great length," answered the maid. "But that was his purpose."

The purpose is the root of the matter; the rest is merely a headache.

Discourse 20

Rumi said: Night and day you are at war, attempting to reform the character of the opposite sex, to cleanse their impurity and to correct their faults. It is better to cleanse yourself through them than trying to cleanse them through yourself. Reform yourself by means of them. Go to them and accept whatever they may say, even if from your viewpoint their words sound absurd or unfair.

It was on account of this truth that Mohammed said, "There is no monkhood in Islam." The way of monks is solitude, dwelling in mountains, men not living with women, and giving up the world. God showed the Prophet a straight and hidden way. What is that way? Marriage, so that we can endure the trials of living with the opposite sex, to listen to their demands, for them to ride roughshod over us, and so in this way to refine our own character.

By enduring and putting up with the tyranny of your spouse it is as though you rub off your own impurity on them. Your character becomes good through forbearance; their character becomes bad through domineering and aggression. Once you have realized this, make yourself clean. Know that they are like a

garment; in them you can cleanse your own impurities and become clean yourself.
Rid yourself of pride, envy and jealousy, until you experience pleasure in struggling and enduring. Through their demands discover spiritual joy. After that, you will endure such struggles, and you will not run from oppression, since you will see the advantages they bring to you.
It is related that Mohammed returned with his Companions from a raid, one night. He told them to beat the drum saying, "Tonight we will sleep at the gate of the city, and enter tomorrow." They asked, "Messenger of God, why don't we return to our homes immediately?" He said, "You might see your wives in bed with strange men. You would be hurt, and a commotion would arise." One of the Companions did not hear; he entered and found his wife with a stranger.
The way of the Prophet is this: It is necessary to endure pain to help rid ourselves of selfishness, jealousy and pride. To experience the pain of our spouses' extravagant desires, the pain of unfair burdens, and a hundred thousand other pains beyond all bounds, so the spiritual path can become clear. The way of Jesus was wrestling with solitude and not gratifying lust. The way of Mohammed is to endure the oppression and agonies inflicted by men and women upon each other. If you cannot go by the Mohammedan way, at least go by the way of Jesus,

so you will not remain completely outside the spiritual path.

If you have the serenity to endure a hundred buffets, seeing the fruits and harvest that come through them, or believing in your hidden heart, "Though in this hour I see no harvest of these sufferings, in the end I will reach the treasures," you will reach the treasuries, yes, and more than you ever desired and hoped.

If these words have no effect upon you now, after a while when you become maturer they will leave a great impression. This is the difference between talking with your spouse and a friend. When you speak to your mate, they remain the same and will not change their ways due to anything you say. You words have no affect on them, indeed they become more determined.

For instance, take a loaf of bread, put it under your arm, and deny it to others, saying, "I will not give this to anyone. Give it? Why, I won't even show it." Even if that loaf had been cast away and the dogs would not eat it because bread is so plentiful and cheap-yet the moment you begin to refuse it, everybody is after it and sets their hearts on it, pleading and protesting, "We want to see that bread which you refuse and keep hidden." Especially if you keep it hidden for a year, insisting emphatically that you will neither give it away nor show it, their eagerness for the loaf passes all bounds, since, "People are passionate for whatever they are denied."

The more you tell your spouse, "Keep yourself hidden," the greater their itch to flirt and show themselves. And through their being hidden, the opposite sex becomes more eager for them. So there you sit in the middle, augmenting eagerness on both sides, and you think of yourself as a reformer! Why, that is the very essence of corruption. If they have in them the natural quality not to do evil, whether you prevent them or not, they will proceed according to their good temperament and pure constitution. So rest assured, and don't worry. If they are the opposite, they will still go their own way; trying to stop them in reality does nothing but increase their eagerness.

Someone said: "We heard some men saying, 'We saw Shams-i Tabriz, we really saw him.'"

Rumi said: Fools, where did they see him? Would you listen to someone who cannot see a camel on the roof of their own house, if they come along and say, "I found a needle in the field and threaded it." That is a fine story, like the person who said, "Two things make me laugh-a black person painting their nails black, and a blind person putting their head out of the window." They are exactly like that. Blind inwardly, they put their heads out of the window of the physical body. What can they see? What does their approval or disapproval amount to?

First it is necessary to acquire inner sight. Then one can see. But even with sight, how can one see what is hidden? In this world there are saints who have achieved union, and other saints beyond those, called

the Veiled Ones of God. The former saints are ever pleading humbly, "Oh Lord God, show us one of Thy Veiled Ones." Now as for those tavern-haunting braggarts, of course they cannot reach or see what their own boasting hides. How can one see the Veiled Ones of God, or know them without their will?

It is not an easy matter. Even the spiritual angels, who are not tempted by either wealth nor rank, who have no veil to separate them, whose food is the pure Light and Beauty of God, whose eyes-keen and far-sighted-see only pure Love, these spiritual angels swing between favor and disfavor toward the people of this world. This is so that, during our moments of disgrace we might tremble and ask, "What have I become? What do I know?" And if some light should shine upon us and we should be graced by a certain joy, we might give thanks a thousand fold to God, saying, "How am I worthy of this?"

Submitting yourself in this way, you can experience great joy even from a word or a glimpse of Shams. For the sail on the ship of our being is our ideal. When there is a sail, the wind can carry us to mighty places. When there is no sail, all words are merely wind.

The lover-beloved relationship is very pleasant; everything between the two is sheer informality. All formalities are for the sake of others. I would give a great exposition of these words, but the hour is late, and one must labor very hard and dig out rivers to reach the pool of the heart. In this matter proofs can-

not work. Here one must be a seeker of love, not an observer. It might seem that I exaggerate the relationship of the lover, but this is not true. In fact, I see that disciples should give up their own purpose for the sake of their master's form.

Thou whose form is fairer far Than a thousand purposes are.

Every disciple who comes to the master must first abandon his or her own purpose, being in need of the master. Baha-al-Din asked the question:

"Surely they shouldn't abandon their own purpose for the sake of the master's form, but for the sake of the master's purpose?"

Rumi answered: That isn't possible. If this were so, then both would be masters. Now you must struggle to find the inward light, to escape and be secure from this fire of confusions. When you acquire such an inward light, all the desires of this world such as rank, honor, and title pass across your inward heart like a lightning-flash. With world lings, the rewards of the unseen world such as the presence of God and yearning for the world of the saints' shine upon their hearts for a moment and then pass like a lightning-flash. Therefore it is rank, honor and title they really seek. However, the people of God become wholly God's, their faces are turned to God. They are preoccupied with and absorbed in God. Worldly passions, like the lust of an impotent man, show briefly but do not take root and quickly pass away.

Discourse 21

Rumi said: Sharif Paysukhta has written:

God dispenses Its grace,
Indifferent to time and space,
Itself, the Spirit of the Whole
Is independent of our soul.
No matter what our ranging thought
Within its compass may be brought,
We find adoration for the Lord,
For It who need not be adored.

These words are shameful; they neither honor God, nor do they honor mankind. Oh poet, what joy does it give you that God should be supremely independent of you? This is not the language of friends; this is the language of enemies. The enemy indeed says, "I am indifferent to you and do not care."

Now consider the loyal and ardent lover of God who, when in a state of ecstatic joy, addresses that Beloved, "You are independent of me!" They would be like a stoker of the fires at the baths, saying, "The Sultan is indifferent and independent of me, a mere stoker. Indeed, the Sultan is indifferent to all stokers." What joy would such a miserable stoker feel with the thought that the king was indifferent to them? No, the right words for the stoker to speak would be: "I

was on the roof of the baths. The Sultan passed by. I hailed him. He looked well at me and then passed me by, still looking at me." Such words might well give joy to that stoker. As for saying, "The king is indifferent to stokers," what sort of praise for the king is that, and what joy can it give the stoker?

No matter what our ranging thought
Within its compass may be brought,

Oh poet, what indeed will pass within the compass of your thought when you find that it is people who are independent of you, they are bored of your thoughts and run away? God's independence is certain, oh poet, but if you have a spiritual state worth anything at all, He will not be independent of you. God's closeness to you establishes the degree of your greatness.

Sheikh Mahalla used to say, "First see, then converse. Everyone sees the Sultan, but it is his favorite who enjoys his conversation." This too is backwards. Moses enjoyed the speech of God. With God's word he was filled. It was only afterwards he sought to see. Moses' station was the station of speech; the station of Mohammed was the station of seeing. How then can the Sheikh's statement be correct?

Someone said to Shams-i Tabriz, "I have established the existence of God by a categorical proof." The following morning our Master, Shams, said, "Last night the angels came down and blessed that man, saying, 'Praise be to God, he has established the exis-

tence of our God! God give him long life! He has done no harm to the honor of men and women!'"

Oh poet, God exists. It needs no proof. If you do anything at all, establish yourself in some rank and station before Him. Otherwise, how can you share in His grace?

Nothing exists that does not proclaim His praise.

Lawyers are clever, a hundred per cent competent in their own specialty. But between them and the spiritual world, a wall has been built to pre- serve their empire of logic and proofs. If that wall did not exist as a veil for them, no one would consult them and their work would disappear.

This is like what Shams said, "The other world is like a sea, and this world is foam from that sea. God desired to keep this foam in order. Therefore, He set certain people with their backs to the sea so this foam would not fall into ruin."

A tent was pitched for a king, and he kept certain people busy constructing this tent. One says, "If I don't make the tent-ropes how will the tent stand up?" Another says, "If I don't make the pegs, where will they tie the ropes?" Still, everybody knows these people are servants of the king. If the weavers gave up weaving and sought to be viziers, the whole world would be naked and bare. So, they were given a joy for their craft. They are content with weaving. Therefore people were created to keep the world of foam in order, and this world was created for the Saint.

God bestows contentment and happiness on everyone in the work that is theirs, so that even if their life should last a hundred thousand years they would still find love for their work. Every day the love for their craft becomes greater, and subtle skills are born to them, which bring them infinite joy and pleasure.
Nothing exists that does not proclaim His praise.
There is one praise for the rope-maker, another for the carpenter who makes the tent-poles, another for the maker of the tent-pins, another for the weaver who weaves the cloth for the tent, another for the saints for whom the tent is made.
Now these seekers who come to us, wanting some time with us, if we say nothing they are disgusted and hurt. Yet if we say something it must be beneficial to their level of attainment. So we approach cautiously, and they leave, criticizing us, saying, "They are holding back what they know. They are hiding from us and running away."
How should the fire run away from the cook pot? It cannot. The truth is that when we see that the vessel is weak, we draw back some distance to protect it. So, it is really the pot that runs away. Our running away is their running away. We are a mirror. If they move to run away, it appears to them in us. We run away for their sake. In a mirror people see themselves. If they see us as weary, that weariness is theirs and a reflection of their weakness. There is no room here for weariness; what use do we have for weariness?

In the baths, once, I showed great submission to Sheikh Salah al-Din, and Sheikh Salah al-Din showed great submission to me. Confronted by his submission, I protested. I thought to myself, "You are carrying submission too far. Submission is better by degrees: First you kiss the hand, then the foot. Little by little you come to a point where it does not stand out as a display, and in return they are moved by your sincerity. They are not chased away, or forced into matching courtesy with courtesy, when you gradually show your affection."

We must act this same way with friends and enemies, doing things gradually. For instance, with an enemy, first we offer them our advice, little by little. If they do not listen, we show some force. If they do not heed that, then we drive them away.

The work of the world proceeds in this way. Don't you see the peace and friendliness of spring? In the beginning it shows us warmth little by little, then it displays its graces more and more. Look at the trees, how little by little they advance. First a smile, then they show their trappings of leaves and fruit, like dervishes and Sufis offering their hearts, giving away all that they possess.

Men and women run away from every goal, whether worldly or spiritual, because they overestimate the initial task. The proper way is a bit at a time. It is the same if someone eats too much; they should diminish it daily by a small bit, gradually. In that way, before a year or two have passed, they will have cut

down what they eat by half, reducing it in such a way that their body does not notice. So it is with worship, withdrawing into solitude, attending to the service of God, and prayer. When a person enters upon the Way of God, for a while their prayers will be short. But after that, if they pray with their whole heart, their prayers will go on and on without end.

Discourse 22

Rumi said to Ibn Chavish: The root of the matter is that you should guard against this backbiting when talking about Sheikh Salah al-Din. Perhaps this will remove these dark shadows and clouds that surround you.

How can you defend yourself? People have left their own country, their fathers and mothers, their households, kinsfolk and families, and have journeyed from Hind to Sind until their boots were cut to shreds, in search of someone having the fragrance of the other world. How many men and women have died of sorrow, never succeeding nor encountering such a person! As for you, you know such a man here in your own house, and you turn your back on him. This is a tragedy of recklessness.

You used to tell me that Sheikh Salah al-Din was the sheikh of sheikhs, a great and mighty man. "From the day I entered his service," you said to me, "I never heard him once mention your name except as Rumi, Our Master, Our Lord, Our Creator. I never heard him change this humble expression for a single day." It must be your ambitions that have blinded you now. Today you say that Salah al-Din is nothing.

What wrong has Sheikh Salah al-Din ever done you? Only, when seeing you fall into a pit of self-destruction, he said to you, "Beware of the pit." He said this out of compassion for you, above all others, but you reject that compassion. Now, you find yourself in the midst of his wrath, and having plunged into this wrath, how will you escape? That is why he says, "Do not dwell in my house of wrath and anger. Move into my house of grace and compassion. Do something in praise of me, and enter my house of love." He says this because then your heart will shed this darkness and fill with light.

He says this to you for your own sake, for your own good, but you charge his compassion to some ulterior motive. What ulterior motive should a man like that have towards you? Isn't it true that whenever you are filled to satisfaction with drink or music, at the same time you are pleased with every enemy, forgiving them all? In that hour, unbeliever and believer become the same in your eyes. Now Sheikh Salah al-Din is the very ocean of this spiritual joy. All the seas of satisfaction are within him. How could he hate anyone, or have plans against them? And especially, what designs would he have against such as locusts and frogs? How can he, who possesses such empire and grandeur, be compared with such miserable creatures?

Is it not said that the Water of Life must be found in darkness? This darkness surrounds the saints, in whose being we find that Eternal Spring. The Water

of Life is hidden in their darkness. If you turn from darkness and run away from it, how can the Water of Life ever reach you?

Don't you think if you wanted to learn sodomy from sodomites, or harlotry from harlots, you could never learn anything without putting up with a thousand disagreeable things, beatings and the thwarting of your desires? This is the only way you could attain your goal. Then how do you expect to attain the eternal and everlasting source of life, which is the station of the prophets and saints, without anything disagreeable or without any sacrifice? How could this ever happen?

What the Sheikh prescribes for you is the same as what Sheikhs of old prescribed; that you give up your wealth and position. Indeed, they used to tell a disciple, "Leave your wife, that we may take her," and the disciples put up with that. As for you, when he counsels you a simple thing, how is it that you run away?

Do you not see how people are overcome by blindness and ignorance when they fall in love, how they will fawn and grovel and sacrifice all their wealth, seeking somehow to win the one they want with every effort. Night and day they think of nothing else, never wearying of their pursuit, yet wearying of everything else. Then, is the love for the Sheikh and the love for God less than this?

Yet, at the smallest word of advice and discipline you object and desert the Sheikh. Hence it is known that

you are no lover or seeker. Were you a true lover and seeker, you would put up with many times what we have described. To your heart, dung would become honey and sugar.

Discourse 23

Rumi said: I would like to go to Tuqat, for that region is warm. Although Antalya is warm, only a few people there understand our language. However, I was speaking there one day when a party of unbelievers was present. In the middle of my talk they began to weep with emotion and show signs of ecstasy.

Someone asked: "What can they understand? What do they know? Only one Muslim in a thousand understands this kind of talk. What could an unbeliever understand that would cause them to weep?"

Rumi answered: It isn't necessary for them to understand the inner meaning of what we say. The vessel of this meaning is the words themselves, and this they do recognize. After all, everyone knows of the Oneness of God, Creator and Provider, the source of all life, where all things return. When anyone hears these words, which are a description and expression of God, a universal emotion and inner feeling stirs them, since out of these words comes a scent of their Beloved and their Quest.

The ways may vary, but the goal is one. Don't you see that there are many roads to the Kaaba? For some the road is from Rum, for some from Syria, others come from Persia or China or by sea from India and

Yemen. So if you consider the roads, they are beyond counting, with infinite differences. But when you consider the goal they are all in accord with one desire.

The hearts of all are upon the Kaaba. The hearts are one in their longing and love for the Kaaba, and in that there is no room for separation. That love is neither belief nor non-belief, for it has nothing to do with the various roads. Once we arrive, this argument and war and those differences in the roads-this woman saying to that man, "You are false, you are an infidel," and that man saying the same about her-once we arrive at the Kaaba, we realize that such fighting is over the roads only, and that the goal of all is the same.

For instance, a bowl's spirit is in love with its maker, and is a slave to those hands that fashion it. Yet some see this bowl and say it should be placed just as it is on the table. Some say the inside of it should be washed first, some say the outside of it must be cleaned. Some say all of it, some say it must never be washed at all. The diversity of opinion comes from the bowl's many uses, but as to the fact that the bowl certainly had a creator who fashioned it, and that it did not come into existence of itself, on this all agree.

Now, men and women in their inmost hearts love God, seek Him, pray to Him and in all things put their hope in Him, recognizing none but God as the central reality ordering their affairs. This is neither belief nor non-belief. Within the heart it has no name.

But when the water of innate truth flows out of the heart towards the sluice of the tongue and takes form, it acquires shape and expression. There it is given the name of infidelity or faith, good or evil. It is the same with plants growing out of the earth. At first they have no form at all. When they make their appearance in this world their shoots all look fine, delicate and white. But as they grow further they take on different shapes and colors. Then we can call them by name.

When believers and infidels sit together and say nothing, they are one and the same. There is no conflict of belief; the heart is a free world. Beliefs are subtle things and cannot be judged. People can judge by outward expression only, God is the fashioner of our secret hearts. When God uncovers your own beliefs to you, not a hundred thousand efforts can hide them again. As for the saying that God needs no instrument, do you not see how He reveals those ideas and beliefs in you without any instruments, without any pen, without any pigment?

Those beliefs are like birds of the air, and wild deer. Until you catch them, it is not allowable by law to sell them. It is not in your power to sell a bird on the wing, for how can you deliver it? Since it is not in your power, it is not yours to sell.

Beliefs then, so long as they are in the heart, are without name and token-they cannot be judged. Would any judge say, "In your heart you made this oath, you had this idea," or "Come, swear that in your

heart you did not think this?" No judge would say this, because no one can judge the heart. Beliefs are birds of the air. Yet once they have been expressed, then immediately they can be judged as true or false, good or evil.

There is a world of bodies, a world of ideas, a world of fantasies, a world of possibilities. God is beyond all worlds, neither within them, nor without. Consider then how God fashions our beliefs, forming them without material means, without pen or instrument. As for this fancy or that idea, if you were to tear open the breast and search particle by particle you would never find that thought. Not in the blood, not in the vein, not above, not below. Being immaterial and beyond time and space, you would not find it outside the breast, either.

Since God's mark is so subtle as to be without trace, consider how subtle and without trace is God, Itself, the fashioner of all! Just as the physical body is gross in relation to the inner meaning of a person, so this subtle and invisible meaning is a gross body and form next to God's subtlety. Il Muslims say, "We will enter the Holy Mosque." Some Muslims say, "If God wills, we will enter." Those who use the expression "if God wills" are the true lovers of God. For the lover does not think that they're in charge of things and a free agent. They recognize that the Beloved is in charge. Hence they say, "If this Beloved wills, I will enter."

Now the literalists take the Holy Mosque to be the Kaaba in Mecca. However, lovers and the elect of God take the Holy Mosque to mean union with God. So they say, "If God wills, we will attain Him and be honored by the sight of Him." For God to say, "If God wills," is very rare. It is the tale of a stranger, and only a stranger can understand such a tale. Yet God has certain servants who are so well loved that He seeks them out, showering them with blessings, and carrying out all the actions of a lover. Just as the lover would say, "If God wills, I will enter," so God says on behalf of that saint, "If God wills."

If I were to try explaining this subtlety, even the saints who have attained God would lose the thread of the discourse. How then is it possible to speak of such mysteries and mystic states to mortal men and women? "The pen wrote this far, and then it broke!" If someone can't see the camel on top of their own house, how can they see the thread of one hair in the mouth of that camel?

To resume: Those lovers who say, "If God wills," such people are absorbed in God. There is no room for anything else. Otherness does not even exist. For until a person has surrendered their image of a separate existence, the Holy Mosque cannot be found. "There is none dwelling in the house but God."

"The vision He entrusted to His Messenger..." This vision is the dream of lovers and true people of God, but the true meaning is only revealed in the other world. When you see in a dream that you are riding

on a horse, this means you will attain your goal; yet what connection does the horse have with a goal? If you dream that you have been given coins of good currency, the meaning is that you will hear true and good words from a wise person; but how does a coin resemble a word? If you dream that you have been hanged before a crowd, you will become the chief of a people; but how do gallows resemble leadership? In the same way, the affairs of this world are a dream. "This world is the dream of a sleeper," and its meaning is seen quite differently in the other world. There it is truly judged by the Divine Interpreter, for to Him all things are revealed.

Like a gardener who enters an orchard and looks at the trees, without even looking at the fruit on the branches, they can judge this tree to be a date, that one a fig, that a pomegranate, a pear, or an apple. The true people of God know the science of trees, therefore they need not wait for the resurrection to see the interpretation of life. Such a person sees beforehand what will be, just as the gardener knows what fruit each branch will surely yield.

All things in this world-wealth, a mate, and clothing-are desired for something other than themselves. Don't you see that even with a hundred thousand gold coins, if you were hungry, and you could find no food, you could not feed yourself on gold? A mate is for the sake of children, companionship and to satisfy passion. Clothes are to ward off the cold. In this way, all things are desired for some other thing,

each desire leading to the next, all ending in the desire for God. He is desired for His own sake, not for anything else. Being beyond all, greater than all, nobler and subtler than all, can God be desired for something less? "So, He is the goal." Within God is the completion of all things, beyond Him there is no transcending.

The human mind churns with doubts and difficulties. The mind can never be rid of these except when it is truly in love-then all its doubts and difficulties vanish. "Your love renders you blind and deaf."

For example, when Iblis would not bow down before Adam and opposed God's command, Iblis said, "My essence is spirit, his essence is clay. Why should the higher bow down before the lower?" So God banished Iblis for opposing and contending with Divine Law. Then Iblis argued, "Alas, O Lord! You made all things. This was Your temptation, and now You are cursing me and banishing me."

Yet when Adam sinned, God expelled him from Paradise, but Adam said nothing back. Then God said to Adam, "O Adam, I have held you responsible and punished you for the sin you committed, why did you not argue with Me? After all, you had a perfect case. You could have said, 'All things proceed from You and are made by You. Whatever You desire in the world comes to pass, and whatever You desire not will never come to pass.' You had a clear and valid case, why did you not argue it?" Adam answered, "I knew that well, Lord, but I did not for-

get courtesy in Your presence. Because of my love for You I could say nothing." Thus Adam's love stayed firm and was not swayed.

This sacred Law of Love is a watering-place, a fountainhead. It is just like the court of a king where many study the king's laws, his commandments and prohibitions, his government-equal justice for nobles and commons-etc. The edicts of the king are without end, and on them the stability of the country rests. But the status of dervishes and Sufis is one of love for the king. Out of their love springs conversation with the king, and knowing his mind and heart. What is knowledge of the king's laws, compared with knowing the ruler himself, his mind and heart? There is a vast difference.

The Sufis and their various teachings are like a school with many scholars. The headmaster pays each scholar according to their qualifications, giving to one ten, the next twenty, another thirty. We too dispense our words according to everyone's degree and qualification. "Speaking to each according to the degree of their understanding."

Discourse 25

Someone entered, and Rumi said: He is beloved and humble, like a branch loaded with fruit-the fruit weighs it down. A branch with no fruit raises its head up high, like the white poplar, but when that fruit exceeds all bounds, they put props under the branch so it will not come down altogether.

Mohammed was extremely humble. All the fruits of this world and the next were gathered upon his branch, so of course he was humbler than others. He said, "No one ever preceded the Messenger of God in making a greeting." No one was able to precede the Prophet in offering greetings because he outstripped all others in extreme humility, and always made his greetings first. Even if others had said their greeting first, still his humility came before they could speak, for everyone has learned the humble greeting from him and hear his greeting within themselves before they say a word.

Everything that ancient people or modern people possess is a shadow of the Messenger of God. Though a person's shadow might cross the threshold before them, still they are first. True, their shadow may appear to lead, but this shadow comes from them, and therefore always follows.

Our grace and humility are not made from this present moment; these atoms existed in that primeval time, from those particles and parts of the first Messenger of God. In this hour they become visible again, but this splendor and brightness is ancient. Its original light was altogether purer and brighter and more humble.

Some people see the beginnings of things, and some look to the end. Those who look to the goal are great and mighty, for although their eyes are fixed on this moment; still they look into the world beyond. But those who see the beginning are greater. They say, "Why look to the end? If wheat is sown in the beginning, barley will not grow. If oats are planted, you cannot reap corn." So their gaze is fixed upon the beginning.

Still there are others even greater yet, who look at neither the beginnings nor the endings-the start and finish do not enter their minds...they are absorbed in God. However, those who are absorbed in worldly things do not see the beginning or end either, but in their case this is out of extreme carelessness-they are the fodder of fools.

So the Man and Woman of God are the foundation.

"But for you, I would not have created the heavens."

All that exists-honor and humility, authority and high degree-all are our inheritance from Them. All attributes are Their shadow, for everything has manifested from Them.

Whatever this hand does it does as the shadow of Spirit, for Spirit's shadow directs it. In truth, Spirit has no shadow, yet it has a shadow without a shadow, just as 'meaning' has form without form. If the shadow of Spirit were not over us, all of our body would wither away-our hands would no longer grasp, our feet would not know how to walk, our eyes and ears would be lost in confusion. Therefore, in reality all those actions proceed from Spirit-the body is the instrument of Spirit's tongue.

In the same way, there is a great person, the caliph of their time. They are like the Universal Spirit, and the spirits of humankind are their body. Whatever the people of this world do is in their shadow. If the actions of some are in error, it is because the Universal Spirit has lifted its shadow from their heads. When someone goes mad and acts crazy, everyone knows that reason has left them, and no longer casts its shadow over them. They are far away from the shadow and shelter of Spirit.

Spirit is kin to the angel. Although angels have definite form, while Spirit does not, both possess the same nature and act exactly the same. We should not be fooled by the form when they are identical in every way. If you dissolved an angel's form, nothing would remain but Spirit. Therefore angels are the embodiment of Spirit.

A bird can be molded of wax, complete with feathers and wings, but still it is wax. If you melt it, don't you see that its head and feet, feathers and wings all re-

turn to wax? Nothing else remains. From this we know that it is wax embodied into a certain shape, but wax none the less.

Similarly, ice is nothing but water. When you melt it, only its form dissolves.

The human being was created like this: They took the feathers of an angel, and tied them to the tail of an ass, in hopes that the ass-from the radiance and companionship of the angel-might become an angel, too. So what is so wonderful if this ass became a human? God is able to do all things.

When a child is first born, it is worse than an ass, sticking its hands in filth and then into its mouth to lick. The mother must spank the baby to stop it. The ass at least has some sort of discrimination; when it urinates, it opens its legs so the urine will not trickle on them. Yet the child, who is worse than an ass, God raises into a man or woman. If God should turn the ass into a human, what is so astounding in that? With God, nothing is a cause for astonishment.

At the resurrection, all parts of a person will speak. The philosophers interpret this allegorical-ly. They say: When the hand speaks, perhaps some sign, like a scratch or abscess, will show on its skin. Then you can say, in a sense that the hand speaks since it gives information, "I ate something causing inflammation, and so I became like this." Or the hand is wounded and becomes black. These signs tell a story, saying "A knife struck me," or "I rubbed myself against a black pot." So much for the philosophers!

The Sunni theologians say: God forbid! No indeed! The hands and feet will speak just as the tongue speaks. On the day of resurrection a person will deny their past saying, "I did not steal." But their hand will answer, "Yes you stole, since I took it." They will then turn to their hand, saying, "You have never spoken before, how can you speak now?" The hand will answer, "God gave us speech, just as It gives all things speech. It gives speech to the door and wall, the stone and clod. What is so astonishing about that?"

You speak with your tongue, yet it is merely a piece of flesh. Your hand is also a piece of flesh. Is your tongue endowed with reason? Yet when God commanded it to speak, it spoke.

Words come according to the attainment of the listener. Speech is like water that flows from a reservoir. How can the water know where they will send it-into the cucumber-patch, the onion-bed, or the rose-garden? But I know this: when water comes in torrents, there the lands are thirsty and extensive. But if only a little trickle flows, that land is small-a little orchard, or a tiny courtyard. The Prophet said, "God inspires wisdom in the tongue of the teacher according to the aspirations of the student." I am a cobbler: the leather is plentiful, but I cut and stitch according to the size of the foot.

I am your mirror, I am your measure;
As much as your stature is,
So much my treasure.

A worm lives under the earth in darkness. It has no eyes or ears because where it lives it does not need them. Since there is no need, why give eyes and ears to worms? God has no scarcity of eyes and ears and It is not miserly, but It gives according to the need. Anything else becomes a burden. God's wisdom and grace remove burdens; how could It do otherwise? For instance, if you gave tailors the tools of a carpenter-axe, saw, and a file-you would burden them, since they cannot use such instruments to make clothes. So God gives according to need and no more. Just as those worms thrive in darkness under the earth, so there are people who are content and satisfied to live in the darkness of this world, having no need for the heavenly world, and no yearning for the Vision. Of what use to them is the eye of clairvoyance or the ear of understanding? Their work in this world needs only the eyes they have. Since they have no desire for the other side, why give them clairvoyance, which would be useless to them?

Do not think that saints
No longer travel upon this road.
Perfect in all life's ways.
Traceless lovers of God.
It is because you cannot see
Their secrets through your eyes,
You fancy in your vain conceit,
No others can gain that prize.

This world continues through heedlessness. If it were not for heedlessness this world would not remain.

Yearning for God, contemplation of the next world, intoxication, and ecstasy-these are the builders of that inner realm. If these true desires revealed themselves to all people, there would be a worldwide exodus. None would remain. Yet God wants both worlds to exist, so It has appointed two sheriffs one heedlessness, the other heedfulness-so that both houses can thrive.

Discourse 26

Rumi said: If I appear lacking in gratitude and appreciation for the kindness and support you show me, both directly and indirectly, it is not out of arrogance or indifference, nor is it because I don't know the importance of returning your favor and love. But I am aware from the purity of your efforts that you do these things sincerely for the sake of God, so I leave it to God to thank you. If I concerned myself with thanking you, granting you verbal honor and praising you, it would be as if some part of the treasure that God has set aside for you was already given, some part of your reward had already been paid.

Humble attitudes, offering thanks and applause-these are worldly pleasures. But when you have gone to worldly pains such as the sacrifice of wealth and position, how can worldly pleasure be a satisfactory return? Therefore, I do not offer thanks since that reward should come entirely from God.

No one can eat wealth. Wealth is sought for what it brings, not what it is. With wealth people purchase horses, servant-girls and slaves. Then they display these riches so that others will praise and applaud them. Therefore, it is the world itself that is held up

so high, and it is this world that is praised and applauded.

Sheik Nassaj of Bukhara was an honored, spiritual man. Learned and great people came to visit him and knelt at his feet. The Sheik was unlettered, but they loved to hear him expounding on the Koran and Traditions of the Prophet. He would say, "I do not know Arabic. Translate a verse from the Koran so I can tell you its meaning." They would translate the verse. Then he would begin to explain and reveal the truth in it. He would say, "The Prophet was in such and such a situation when he uttered this verse. The circumstances took place like this..." And he would describe in detail the spiritual level of that situation, the ways leading up to it, and how the Prophet gained that state.

One day a descendant of Ali was praising a certain judge while standing next to the judge, saying, "There is no judge like this man anywhere in the world. He does not take bribes. He dispenses justice amongst others without partiality or favor, purely and sincerely for the sake of God." When Sheik Nassaj heard this he replied, "To say that he doesn't take bribes is certainly a lie. You, an honored descendant of Ali, praise and applaud him to his face, saying that he does not take bribes. Isn't that a bribe? What could be a better bribe than that?"

Sheik Tirmidhi once said, "Saiyid Burhan al-Din expounds truths so well because he has studied the books, secret writings and treatises of the masters." A

Sufi answered, "But you study them as well. Why don't you speak like he does?" Tirmidhi replied, "Well, Burhan al-Din has also made great spiritual efforts and accomplishments." The Sufi said, "Why didn't you say that in the first place? You only know how to repeat what you have read; that is the difference. But we are now speaking of something greater than books-you too can speak of that!"

Few care about the other world at all. They have fixed their hearts upon this world entirely.

Some seek these teachings to eat the bread of God, some only to inspect the bread. They want to learn these words just to sell them. These words are like a beautiful bride; if a beautiful maiden is bought to be sold again, how can she love her buyer or fix her heart upon him? Since the pleasure of that merchant comes only in selling, he is as good as impotent. He buys the girl to sell her, not having the manhood and virility to want her for himself.

If a fine Indian sword falls into the hands of an effeminate man, he will take it to sell it. If a mighty Pehlevi bow falls into his hands, he will also sell it since he does not have the strength of arm to draw the bow. He desires that bow for the value of the string, he has no capacity for the string, itself. He is in love merely with what it will bring. When such a man sells the bow, he trades it for rouge and indigo. What else should he do? Marvelous! What could he buy better than that?

These words mean nothing except to the initiated! Beware! Do not say, "I have understood." The more you understand and grasp these words, the farther you will be from understanding them.

Their meaning comes in not understanding. All your troubles, misfortunes and disappointments arise from such understanding. This understanding is a chain for you. You must escape it to gain anything at all.

You say, "I filled my sheep-skin in the sea, but the sea was too great to be contained in my sheepskin." That is absurd. If you say, "My sheep-skin was lost in the sea," that is excellent! That is the root of the matter. Reason is fine and useful until it brings you to the door of the King. Once you have reached His door, give up reason, for in that hour reason is a sheer loss to you, a highway robber. When you have reached the King, surrender yourself to Him, you have no use then for the how and wherefore.

For instance, you have an uncut cloth you want made into a tunic or a cloak. Reason brings you to a tailor. Until that moment reason is fine, for it brings the cloth to the tailor. Now in that very moment reason must be forgotten and you must abandon yourself wholly to the direction of the tailor. In the same way, reason is fine when you are sick because it brings you to the physic cian. After that, reason is of no use to you, since you must surrender yourself to the advice of the physician.

Your companions hear your secret cries of love for God. When they come to you, you will know which of them has that true substance-the responsiveness of Soul. In a train of camels, the camel in rut is easily spotted by its eyes, its manner of walking and its breath.

"Their mark is on their faces, the trace of prostration."

Although it is the roots of a tree that drink, you can see the results of that drinking through its branches, leaves and fruit. The tree that does not drink withers-how can this stay concealed?

You will hear their loud shouts because they understand paragraphs from a single word you speak, and from a single letter they recognize all the overtones. They are like someone who has studied the Koran; As soon as they hear the first word from a Koran commentary, they understand all the root ideas and questions, since they know its source. They will offer observations on that single word as if to say, "Within the depths of this subject I know many things and see many things, for I have worked and studied, turning night into day, and I have found the treasures."

"Did We not expand your breast out of love for you?"

The expansion of the breast is infinite. Once that expansive truth has been tasted, we understand much from even one hint. But beginners will only understand, from a word, the meaning of that one word. What inner knowledge and ecstasy can they possess?

Words are spoken according to the capacity of the listeners. If beginners do not know how to draw wisdom out, how can it come forth? Once they breathe in, then wisdom will fill their hearts. But they say, "For heaven's sake, why aren't the words spoken?" The answer is, "For heaven's sake, why don't you draw this wisdom in?" Whoever withholds the power to listen also withholds from the speaker the impulse to speak.

In the time of the Prophet, a certain unbeliever had a Muslim slave who was a man of true substance. One morning the unbeliever ordered his slave, "Fetch basins. I am going to the baths." On the way they passed by the Prophet praying in the mosque with his companions. The slave said, "Master, for God's good sake take this bowl for a moment, so that I can make a few genuflections, then I will attend to you." Entering the mosque, he prayed. The Prophet came out with his companions. The slave remained alone in the mosque. His master waited for him till mid-morning, then he shouted, "Come out, slave!" The slave answered, "They won't let me go, as the work has gone beyond bounds." The master put his head inside the mosque to see who it was that would not let the slave go. Except for a shoe and a shadow he saw no one. Nobody stirred. He said, "Well, who is it that won't let you come out?" The slave replied, "The same One who will not allow you to come in, the very same One whom you cannot see."

People always want to see new things that they have not yet seen. Night and day they seek after new experiences. They are slaves of anything they have not yet enjoyed, but become bored and run away from what they have already heard and understood. For this reason the philosophers reject the Vision of God, saying, "If you can become bored with what you see, this cannot be truth." The Sunni theologians say, "This could occur only if God was single-colored. But in truth He comes forth in a hundred colors, every instant."

"Every day He is upon a task."

If God should reveal Itself a hundred thousand times, not one moment would resemble another. Every instant you see God's display and yet not even one act resembles another. In times of happiness you see one display, in times of weeping you find another. During moments of fear you see one face, during hope another. Since God's creations and His acts vary infinitely, not one like another, so you can be sure the display of His Essence also varies endlessly. You, too, being a single spark of God's flame, change a thousand times every instant and never stay the same.

There are certain seekers of God who proceed from the Koran to God. Others more elect come from God, find the Koran here, and know that God has sent it down.

"We have seen the Remembrance, and
We will watch over it."

Commentators say that this quote refers to the Koran, but it also means, "We have seen in you a substance, a seeking, a yearning. We will watch over that, not letting it go to waste, but will bring it to its rightful place."

Once you say "God", then stand firm under all calamities that rain down upon you. A certain person came to the Prophet and said to him, "Truly I love you." The Prophet said, "Take heed what you say." The person repeated, "Truly I love you." Mohammed said, "Take heed what you say." They said, "Truly I love you." Mohammed said, "Now stand firm, for with my own hand I will slay you. Woe upon you!"

Another person came to the Prophet and said, "I don't want this religion. By God, take it back. Ever since I entered your religion I've had no peace for a single day. My wealth is gone, my spouse has left, my child cannot be found, my respect is destroyed, my strength is sapped, even my lust has disappeared." Mohammed answered,

"What did you expect? Wherever our religion goes it does not return without uprooting that person and sweeping clean their house."

"None but the purified shall touch God."

So long as there remains in you a single trace of self-love, God will not show His face to you. You will not be worthy of His presence. You must become wholly indifferent to yourself and the world, so that Friend can show His face. So, whenever our religion lodges

in a heart, it will not withdraw its hand until it brings that heart to God and severs from it all that is untrue. The Prophet went on to say to that person, "You have no peace because sorrow's purpose is to empty you of previous joys. So long as food fills your stomach, you are not given new food to eat. During elimination, we eat nothing. When we are empty and hungry, then we are given food. Be patient and grieve, for grieving is the emptying of yourself. After you are empty, then joy can enter-a joy with no sorrow, a rose without a thorn, a wine without cropsickness."

Why, night and day, do you search for quiet and rest? They cannot be found in this world. But not for one instant do you give up seeking these things. The comfort you find in this world is like a lightning flash that passes but never endures. And what kind of lightning is it? Lightning full of hail, full of rain and snow, full of suffering. For instance, someone sets out for Antalya. They go toward Caesarea hoping to reach Antalya, and never turn back even though it is impossible to reach Antalya by this route. But another who goes by the Antalyan road, though lame and feeble, still they will reach their goal, since that is where the Antalyan road ends.

No task in this world or the next is without suffering. Therefore, devote your suffering to the next world so it will not be wasted. You say, "O Mohammed take away this religion from me, for I can find no rest."

How can our religion let anyone go before it brings them to the goal?

There was a certain teacher who, due to poverty, wore only a single garment of cotton in the middle of winter. By chance, torrents of rain brought down a bear out of the mountains, carrying the bear along with its head hidden in the water. The children, seeing its back, cried,

"Teacher, look! A fur coat has fallen into the water, and you are cold. Take it!"

The teacher in dire need and coldness jumped in to catch the fur coat. The bear quickly plunged its claws into the teacher's back. The bear in the water thus caught the teacher.

"Teacher," the children shouted, "either grab the fur coat or let it go and come out!"

"I am letting the fur coat go," answered the teacher, "but the fur coat isn't letting me go. What should I do?"

How can God's love let you go? We should be thankful that God does not let us go. When a child is small it knows nothing but milk and its mother. Yet, God does not leave the child there, but leads it on to eat bread and to play, and in this manner draws it on to the stage of reason. So too in this world-which is in its infancy compared with that other world-God does not leave you here, but brings you on so you can realize that this is infancy and nothing at all. I am amazed at the people who must be dragged to Paradise in chains and fetters.

"Take them and fetter them,
then roast them in Paradise,
then roast them in Union,
then roast them in Beauty,
then roast them in Perfection."

Fishermen do not drag out a fish all at once. Once the hook has entered the fish's throat they reel it in a little so it will lose strength. Then they let it out, and draw it in again, until it weakens. When the hook of Love falls into our throat, God draws us gradually so those bad attributes will leave us little by little.

"There is no God, but God"-that is what the common folk say. The elect believe "There is no Self, but Self." Someone sees in a dream that they are a ruler. They are seated on a throne with servants, chamberlains and princes standing by. They say, "I am ruler, and there is no ruler but I." They say this in their sleep. When they wake up and see no one in the house but themself, they say, "I am, and there is no other than that I Am." To realize this, one must be fully awake.

Every religion denies every other. One group says, "We are the true ones, revelation belongs to us, all others are false." All the others say exactly the same. So the two and seventy creeds are in agreement that all others are without revelation. They are all in accord that there is no revelation to any other religion, and that out of the lot of them there is but one true path. So, a believer must have discrimination and wisdom to know which one it is. Such discrimination and wisdom is true faith.

Someone said: "The religions that don't know are many, and those that know are few. If we are to occupy ourselves with distinguishing all of them it will be a long business."
Rumi answered: Although there are many who do not know, when you know a few you have known them all. In the same way when you know a single handful of corn, you know all the corn-stacks in the world. If you have tasted sugar once, though halvah is made in a hundred different varieties, still in that halvah you know the sugar.
If these words seem repetitious to you, it is only because you have not yet learned the first lesson, so I must say it every day. There was once a student who was taught for three months, but never went beyond "A is for apple." The child's father came and said to the teacher, "I never fail to pay your fees. If I have ever failed a payment, please let me know, and I will pay more." The teacher answered, "The failure is not yours, but the child doesn't go beyond this point." The teacher called the student and said, "Say, A is for apple." The child said, "Is for apple," unable to say "A." The teacher said, "You see? Since the child has not passed the first point, how can I give any more?"
The father said, "Praise belongs to God."
We do not say, "Praise belongs to God" after a meal because there was a shortage of bread. Bread and blessings are without limit, but the appetite is gone and the guests are sated. That is why we say, "Praise belongs to God."

The bread of revelation is very different from this worldly bread, because even with no appetite you can force yourself to eat as much worldly bread as you want. And since it is inanimate, you can drag it wherever you like. It does not have the spirit to withhold itself from those who are not worthy. But Divine bread is a living wisdom and a living blessing. As long as you desire nothing else, it comes towards you and becomes your food. But should your desire fail, you will not be able to eat it, even by force. It hides behind the veil and will not show you its face.

(Rumi was telling about the miracles of the saints. He said:) For someone to fly from here to the Kaaba in an instant is not so wonderful, even though there are such stories of saints having done so. But a true miracle is this: that God should bring you from a lowly estate to a high estate, that you should travel from ignorance to reason, from the inanimate to life. Just as at first you were earth and mineral, God brought you to the vegetable world. Then you journeyed from the vegetable world to the animal world, from the animal world to the world of humanity.

These are the true miracles. Through these stations and forms you journeyed, never once thinking or imagining where you would arrive, by which road you would be taken, or how you would be brought. Even so, you will be brought on to a hundred other worlds. Do not doubt it, and if you are told such stories, believe them.

A bowl of poison was brought as a present to Umar.
"Of what use is this?" he asked.
They said, "When it is not publicly advisable to kill someone openly, you can give them a little of this. Then they will die secretly. If it is an enemy who cannot be slain with the sword, with a little of this they can be killed clandestinely."
"You have brought me a very good thing," he said. "Give it to me to drink, for within me is a mighty enemy whom the sword cannot reach. I have no greater enemy in the world than he."
"There is no need to drink it all up in one gulp," they told him. "Just one sip is enough. This bowl is sufficient for a hundred thousand people."
"My enemy, too, is not one person," said Umar. "He is a thousand strong, and has overthrown a hundred thousand."
He then seized the cup and drank it all in one draught. At once the assembled multitude all became believers, crying, "Your religion is true!"
"You have all become believers," said Umar, "and yet this infidel within me has not yet become a believer."
What Umar desired was not the faith of the common people. He had that faith and more- indeed, he had the faith of the veracious. He was seeking the faith of the Prophets in absolute certainty. That was what he hoped for.
The report of a lion spread abroad through all parts of the world. It was said this lion had a special qual-

ity: Anyone who approached him boldly, and rubbed their hands upon him lovingly, would be unharmed, but if they were afraid and timorous the lion would be enraged against them. Sometimes he even attacked, as if to say, "What is this bad opinion you have of me?"

A certain person, marveling at the rumor, traveled from far away to see the lion. For a year this person endured the rigors of the road, and traveled from town to town. After finally arriving at the thicket and spying the lion from afar, this lion seeker stood still and could advance no closer.

The people said to this person, "You set forth on a long road out of love for this lion. For this creature you have struggled on for a year. Now that you have come so close, why do you stand still? Advance one more step!"

But none of them had the courage to take a further step. They all said, "The steps we took up to here were all easy. Yet this one step we cannot make."

What Umar desired was that step, to take one step in the presence of the lion towards the lion. That step is a great and rare matter, the concern of only the chosen and intimate of God. Yet this is the true step-the rest are mere footprints. Such faith comes only to prophets who have washed their hands of their own life.

A lover is a wonderful thing. We derive strength, life and growth from even the thought of our beloved. Why is this surprising? Laila's spirit gave strength to

Majnun and became his food. If her image had such power and influence over Majnun, then why should you marvel at the thought of God giving strength to Umar? That was not a mere thought. That was the very soul of all realities! It is just such a thought that maintains this world.

You say "reality" is what you can see and perceive with your senses, otherwise you call it "imagination." The opposite it true! This world is what is imagined. Out of reality springs a hundred worlds like this that will rot one day and disappear. Then a new world springs forth, even better than the last. Reality does not become old or new. These are but temporary expressions of what is Real.

An architect sees a building in their thoughts. They picture it to be so tall, so long, its floor angles this way, its courtyard is shaped like this. People do not call this "imagination." But when someone, who knows nothing about building, talks about such details, certainly that is different. As people say, "They are just imagining things."

Discourse 29

A Christian by the name of al-Jarrah said: "A number of Sheik Sadr al-Din's companions drank with me, and they said, "Jesus is God, as you claim. We confess that to be truth, but we conceal and deny it to preserve the honor of our community."

Rumi said: God forbid! These are the words of those drunken with the wine of Satan, the mis-guider. How could it be that Jesus, with such a frail body, who was forced to flee from the plotting Jews, place after place, who stood less than two cubits tall, should be the preserver of the seven heavens-each with a thickness of five hundred years, and from each heaven to the next a distance of five hundred years, and every earth five hundred years, and from each earth to the next five hundred years? And under this Throne, the sea of spirit whose depth is even greater, even many times the like of it? How could your reason accept that the ruler of all these is the feeblest of forms? Moreover, that before being born, Jesus was the creator of the heavens and the earth? Glory be to God, above what the wrongdoers assert!

The Christian said: "His body was mere dust. Dust went to dust, and pure spirit to pure spirit."

Rumi said: If the spirit of Jesus was God, where went his spirit? Spirit returns to its Origin and Creator. If he was himself the Origin and Creator, where should he go?

The Christian said: "So we found it stated, and we took it as our religion."

Rumi answered: If you find and inherit your parents' false gold, black and corrupt, do you mean you will not change it for gold of sound quality, free of alloy and adulteration? No, you keep that gold, saying, "We found it so."

Or you inherit from your parents a paralyzed hand, and you find a treatment and a physician to heal that hand. Do you accept it? No, instead you say, "I found my hand paralyzed, and I will not change it." Or if you find salt water on a farm where your parents died and you were brought up, but you are shown another farm whose water is sweet, whose herbs are wholesome, whose people are healthy. Do you desire to move to that other farm and drink the sweet water that would rid you of all diseases and ailments? No, you say, "We found this farm with its salt water and its ailments, and we hold on to what we found."

God forbid! This is not the action or the words of an intelligent person possessed of sound senses. God gave you an intelligence of your own separate from your parents' intelligence, a sight of your own other than your father's sight, a discrimination of your own. Why do you nullify your sight and your intelli-

gence, following an intelligence that will mislead and destroy you?

Yutash-his father was a cobbler. Yet when he attained the Sultan's presence, learning the manner of kings and how to be Master of the Sword and the Sultan conferred on him the highest rank, he never said, "I found my father a cobbler, so I do not want this post. Give me, O Sultan, a shop in the market so I can practice cobbling." Indeed, even a dog, for all its baseness, once it has learned to become a hunter for the Sultan, forgets how it was raised, skulking in rubbish heaps and waste ands and craving for carrion. On the contrary, it follows the Sultan's horses and pursues the game. It is the same with the hawk. When the Sultan has trained it, it never says, "I inherited from my father desolate haunts in the mountains and the devouring of dead things, so I will not heed the Sultan's drum, or his game."

If the intellect of the beast can choose something better than what it inherited from its parents, it is monstrous and horrible that a human being, superior to all the inhabitants of the earth in reason and discrimination, should be less than a beast. We take refuge in God from that!

Certainly it is right to say that God honored Jesus and drew him close, so that whoever serves Jesus has served the Lord, whoever obeys him has obeyed the Lord. But since God sends a prophet in every age, manifesting by their hand all that was manifested by Jesus' hand and more, it behooves us to follow that

prophet-not for the sake of the prophet, but for the sake of God.

Only God can be served for Its own sake. Therefore, only God is truly loved. Love for all else ends in God.

So, love a thing only for God, and seek a thing only for God, until in the end you come to God and love It for Itself.

To dress up the Kaaba is a vain desire,
God's presence is all the cloth you need.

Just as worn-out and ragged clothes conceal the elegance of wealth and grandeur, so excellent clothes and fine raiment conceal the mark and beauty and perfection of the saint. When the saint's clothes are in shreds and patches, then their heart is revealed.

Discourse 30

There are heads that are adorned by crowns of gold, and there are heads whose beautiful curls are merely hidden by jewels and gold. The curls of our heart's beloved arouse love, and love is the throne-room of the heart. But a crown is nothing but metal and stones.

We sought everywhere for Solomon's ring. We found his wisdom far from riches. Abandoning wealth we found that beautiful treasure. In poverty we took our repose, and our Beloved was pleased with nothing so much as this.

Well, I am a whoremonger. Since I was young, I have been a seller of love. I know this destroys barriers and consumes the veils of the heart. Love is the root of all obedience; all else is mere adornment. If you do not sacrifice, how can you gain your heart's desire? Giving up everything leads to annihilation, the source of all pleasures where no separation exists.

"And God is with the patient."

In every shop or potion, every merchandise or trade, the end of the thread for each one of these is the need of the human spirit. Until the need arises, the end of that thread is hidden. With every religion, every faith, every grace, every miracle, and all the states of

the prophets-the end of each thread is within us. Until the need appears, the end of that thread remains invisible.

"All things are numbered and clearly recorded."

Someone asked: "Is the source of good and evil one thing or two?"

Rumi said: From the point of view that they are continually at war with one another, the answer is obviously two-since a person cannot be opposed to himself. But, from the viewpoint that evil is inseparable from good-for good is the giving up of evil, and the giving up of evil is impossible without evil, and were it not for the incitement of evil, no one would ever abandon the good-from this point of view they are not two. The Magians said that Yazdan is the creator of good things and Ahriman is the creator of evil and hateful things. But desirable things are never separated from hated things. The desirable cannot exist without the hateful, since what we like is always compared to what we hate, and the more we think evil of one thing, the more we desire its opposite. Joy is the end of sorrow; the end of sorrow without joy is impossible. So they are one and indivisible.

Until a thing passes away, its true meaning cannot be known. No one's life can be judged until it is finished, because what starts evil can turn out good. And until words pass away into speech, who can know their purpose?

Whoever criticizes a Sufi in reality does the Sufi a good turn, for the Sufi shies away from praise. The

Sufi is an enemy of vanity, hence whoever speaks evil of the Sufi's ego, speaks evil of the Sufi's enemy, and therefore helps them. "Things become clear through their opposites." So the Sufi knows the critic is not really their enemy, but their friend.

I am like a smiling garden surrounded by a wall of filth and thorns. Those passing by do not see the garden; they see only the wall and ridicule it. Why then would the garden be angry with them? The critics only hold themselves back, because to reach the garden they must first cross the wall. So by finding fault with the wall, they send themselves far away from the garden and work to their own destruction. The Prophet said, "I laugh as I slay," meaning he kills the unbelievers in one manner, so that unbelievers will not kill themselves in a hundred ways. So, of course, he laughs as he slays.

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Mevlâna Celâleddîn Rûmî
800. Doğum Yıl Dönümü

Mawlana is surely one of the most preeminent figures of Turkish-Islamic world. This is an immutable fact from the point of both history of literature and religion. In order to gain a satisfactorily understanding about him and his thoughts, not only studies on him but also his own works must be read. The easiest way to fill the void is publishing selections from voluminous works of him those have not been reprinted for a long time. We are happy to present "Selections from Great Works of Mawlana" series for admirers of him. The Selections series were prepared by a group of experts. Therefore, these selections serve as important sources in that they fill the void in their fields and also they are enriched by sufficient monographic information.

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